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ABSTRACT

This monograph describes an investigation into the family values of colored and white cultural groups in South Africa. Experts in social work and marriage counseling were first surveyed, followed by in-depth interviews in groups with varying combinations of culture, language, social class and age differences. Detailed findirgs are presented on beliefs about the survival of the family as a lifestyle, family types, and expectations and opinions on love, communication, authority patterns, childrearing, and sex education and changing values underlying sexuality. Special attention was given to beliefs about social factors and values promoting high quality marriage, family life, and parent-child relationships. Based on findings, the monograph provides recommendations for programs that would promote the development of family life. Includes an abstract in Afrikaans. (Contains 31 references.) (JPB)

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Values supporting quality family life: an exploratory descriptive study

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HSRC Co-operative Research Programme on
Marriage and Family Life
Human Sciences Research Council

Report HF/MF-33 1997

Values supporting quality family life: an exploratory descriptive study

Sylvia Viljoen • *Anna F Steyn*

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3

Values supporting quality family life: an exploratory descriptive study

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1997

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The Co-operative Research Programme on Marriage and Family Life forms part of the Group: Democracy and Governance of the HSRC. The programme concentrates on the structure and dynamics of family life, the nature of family disorganization and disintegration and the nature of change taking place in society in respect of family structures and processes.

This report focuses on values supporting quality family life in various regions in South Africa.

The opinions expressed in the report are those of the authors and not necessarily those of the HSRC or the Department of Welfare.

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Ekserp

Hierdie monograaf beskryf 'n ondersoek na die gesinswaardes van blanke en kleurling-kultuurgroepe.

In 'n ontginningsfase is die menings van deskundiges op die gebied van maatskaplike werk en huweliksberaad uitgelok, en dié fase is gevolg deur 'n reeks diepte-onderhoude in groepe bestaande uit verskillende kombinasies van kultuur, taal, maatskaplike klas en generasie (die jeug, ouers en grootouers) in vyf Suid-Afrikaanse provinsies.

Volledige bevindinge word aangebied oor sake soos menings (*beliefs*) oor die voortbestaan van die gesin as lewensstyl, gesinstipes, en verwagtinge en idees oor liefde, kommunikasie, gesagspatrone, ens. Aandag word in die besonder gewy aan menings oor dit wat hoëgraadse huweliks- en gesinslewe bevorder of in die wiele ry.

Aanbevelings beklemtoon programme wat die ontwikkeling van gesonde gesinslewe kan bevorder.

Abstract

This monograph describes an investigation into the family values of coloured and white cultural groups.

In an exploratory phase the opinions of experts in social work and marriage counselling were elicited, and this was followed by in-depth interviews in groups with varying combinations of culture, language, social class and generation (young people, parents and grandparents) in five South African provinces.

Detailed findings are presented on such matters as beliefs about the survival of the family as a lifestyle, family types, and expectations and opinions on love, communication, authority patterns, etc. Special attention was paid to beliefs about what promotes and what prejudices high quality marriage and family life.

Recommendations emphasize programmes that would promote the development of sound family life.

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They also wish to thank all those people who so willingly undertook the tasks of organizing and convening groups and of arranging venues for the group discussions. Working with them was both a pleasure and a privilege.

Especial thanks are also due to the hundreds of participants in the group discussions, from three different generations, who entered so enthusiastically into the proceedings. It goes without saying that this report could never have been compiled without their participation. Each of the groups was a real source of inspiration for the researchers.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

		Page
Chapter 1: Theoretical and methodological background		1
1.1	**Introduction**	1
1.2	**The aim and the rationale of the research project**	1
1.3	**Theoretical and historical review of marriage and the family**	2
1.4	**Definition of related concepts**	8
1.4.1	The concept "values"	8
1.4.2	The concept "family"	11
1.5	**Methodological point of departure and research design**	12
1.5.1	Methodological point of departure	12
1.5.2	Research design	14
Chapter 2: General values supporting quality family life		20
2.1	**Introduction**	20
2.2	**General belief in the survival of marriage and family life**	21
2.2.1	Social factors	22
2.2.2	Religious factors	22
2.2.3	Procreative factors	23
2.2.4	Personal and individualistic factors	24
2.3	**Ambivalences and uncertainties regarding marriage and family life**	24
2.3.1	Fears for the disappearance of marriage and family life	24
2.3.2	Ambivalent feelings about entering into matrimony	25
2.4	**The value of permanence in marriage**	26
2.5	**The value of exclusivity**	28
2.6	**The value of family unity**	30
2.7	**Family types**	31
2.7.1	Desired family composition	31
2.7.2	The single-parent family	32
2.7.3	Cohabitation	32
2.7.4	The extended family	34
2.8	**Summary**	36

		Page
Chapter 3: Values supporting quality marital relationships		38
3.1	**Introduction**	38
3.2	**Love and respect**	39
3.3	**Communication**	41
3.3.1	The nature of communication	41
3.3.2	Levels of communication	42
3.4	**Patterns of authority in the husband-wife relationship**	43
3.4.1	The husband-dominant pattern	44
3.4.2	The husband as head of the household	45
3.4.3	The egalitarian pattern	46
3.4.4	The wife-dominant pattern	47
3.5	**Characteristics of a quality understanding in marriage**	48
3.6	**Personality traits conducive to quality marital relationships**	50
3.7	**Factors prejudicial to quality marriage and family life**	53
3.8	**The implications for quality marriages of married women's work outside the home**	54
3.8.1	Reasons for married women entering or re-entering the labour market	55
3.8.2	Opinions and attitudes towards women's involvement in work outside the home	56
3.8.3	Implications for the allocation of household tasks	57
3.9	**Summary**	59
Chapter 4: Values supporting quality parent-child relationships		62
4.1	**Introduction**	62
4.2	**Love and respect**	63
4.3	**Child's relationships with father and mother**	64
4.3.1	Father-child relationship	64
4.3.2	Mother-child relationship	65

		Page
4.4	**Parent-child communication**	66
4.5	**Authority**	68
4.6	**The process of bringing up children**	69
4.6.1	Setting positive examples	69
4.6.2	Disciplining	70
4.6.3	Rows in the children's presence	71
4.6.4	Peer group pressure	72
4.7	**Sex education and changing values underlying sexuality**	73
4.7.1	The desirability of premarital chastity	73
4.7.2	The desirability of sex education	75
4.7.3	Contraceptives and teenage pregnancies	76
4.8	**Summary**	77
Chapter 5: Summary and recommendations		79
5.1	**Introduction**	79
5.2	**Positive values underpinning quality marriage and family life**	80
5.2.1	Values underpinning quality family life	80
5.2.2	Values underpinning quality marital relationships	81
5.2.3	Values underpinning quality parent-child relationships	82
5.3	**Recommendations for the development of support programmes for quality marriage and family life**	84
5.3.1	Programmes for young people in the post-school context	85
5.3.2	Preparation for parenthood	85
5.3.3	Marriage enrichment programmes	86
5.4	**Future research**	86
Bibliography		88

LIST OF TABLES

		Page
Table 1:	Distribution of groups interviewed	18
Table 2:	Persons indicating love and respect as important values in family life	40
Table 3:	Persons indicating communication as a factor in quality marital relationships	41
Table 4:	Types of behaviour contributing to quality marital relationships	50
Table 5:	Personality factors contributing to quality marital relationships	52
Table 6:	Factors that can lead to the development of serious marital and family problems	54

CHAPTER 1

THEORETICAL AND METHODOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

1.1 INTRODUCTION

On the basis of a letter received from the Committee for Marriage and Family Life established by the South African Welfare Council, exploratory talks were held in 1993 on research topics identified by this committee. Particularly because 1994 had been declared the International Year of the Family, a study of family values was identified as a priority. The following quotation (in translation from the Afrikaans) from the committee's letter provides background to the present study:

> Government concern as to the state of family life in South Africa led the South African Welfare Council to establish a special committee to promote quality family life: the Committee for Marriage and Family Life. The promotion of quality family life also became the chief goal of the National Plan for Family Life designed and formulated by the committee shortly after its inception.

It was decided to utilize the HSRC Co-operative Research Programme as the research arm of the committee. In 1994, after several discussions, an agreement on the research in question was concluded between the HSRC (acting through the then Committee of the Co-operative Research Programme on Marriage and Family Life) and the Department of Welfare.

In 1993 Anna F. Steyn had completed a study on family structures in South Africa, *Gesinstrukture in die RSA* (translated into English in 1993: *Family structures in the RSA)*, which was published by the HSRC Co-operative Research Programme. In 1994 Sylvia Viljoen completed a study, *Strengths and weaknesses in the family life of black South Africans*, also published by the HSRC Co-operative Research Programme. On the basis of this research, Viljoen acted as project supervisor and Steyn as co-supervisor in executing the Department of Welfare commission for research into values supporting quality family life.

1.2 THE AIM AND THE RATIONALE OF THE RESEARCH PROJECT

In the agreement referred to above (given here throughout in translation from the Afrikaans), the aim of the research was formulated as "to investigate the values supporting quality family life".

In discussions with the committee the research was seen as "a prerequisite for developing strategies for promoting quality family life". The agreement also refers to Viljoen's previously mentioned study (1994) on the strengths and weaknesses of family life among

black South Africans and sees the present study as "involving coloured and white people of various socio-economic classes and family types in order to determine what strengths or values *they* see as worthwhile for families to strive for and what *they* regard as obstacles to their achievement. Consequently the study will focus on discovering and describing people's subjective life worlds."

Research into the values underlying quality family life is important since the family has undergone a great many changes this century. These changes have put the family under strain, resulting in a high degree of family disorganization reflected, *inter alia*, in the rising divorce rate and the increasing incidence of cohabitation, illegitimacy and family violence. Such escalating symptoms of disorganization have been variously interpreted by family researchers. Some have gone so far as to predict the "death" of the family. From this negative view of the future of the family the question arises to what extent the people constituting society do indeed hold values that continue to provide the basis for positively functioning family life and, if indeed such values are held, what they are. So as to see this question in the right perspective, it is necessary to give careful consideration to the debate on the crisis in the family, its decline and even its possible "death".

1.3 THEORETICAL AND HISTORICAL REVIEW OF MARRIAGE AND THE FAMILY

Our knowledge of the nature of family life and household composition in earlier times is very incomplete. Historical sources do, however, indicate that in the past a variety of influences drawn from diverse societal contexts were exerted on the family. This contributed to the substantial variation that can be traced in family life and family stability over time, as well as to the substantial changes to both the family and conceptions of the family.

In this connection, the Roman Empire, a major contributor to the development of Western civilization, exhibited considerable diversity. Kooy (1967), for example, has shown that there was a variety of family types in the Roman Empire and that the family types found among the rural population differed from those of the urban population, as did those of the rich from the poor. This is attributable to the vast differences in their living conditions. Despite this, Kooy claims that certain general tendencies are clearly discernible in Roman family life from the beginning of the Christian era. These include a high degree of family individualization, romanticization of marriage, increased equality of husband and wife, a rise in the status of children, a decline in the reproductive function and, indisputably, increasing disorganization and instability in family life.

With the rise of Christianity, which, as does the classical age, constitutes a major influence on the development of Western civilization, we see a change in views of family life: in the writings of St Paul and the Church Fathers, the family begins to be recognized. Christianity accorded legal status only to monogamous marital relationships and was outspokenly antisensualist, holding the view that sexual relationships should be confined to marriage and further limited to the purpose of procreation. Considerable emphasis is also placed on the importance of the proper upbringing of children and of the mutual support and encouragement

due by one spouse to the other. Marriage was considered an indissoluble relationship and therefore the Church strongly opposed divorce. In consequence of these beliefs, the Church came to exercise a great deal of control over married and family life, especially as marriage was considered a sacrament. Kooy (1967:31-32) points out that early Christian family life was not necessarily characterized by uniformity, since the family codes of the various peoples who were converted to Christianity differed radically. He also expresses doubt as to whether the early Christians really carried out the ecclesiastical precepts to the letter in their daily lives. However, he does indicate that conversion to Christianity must have resulted in a modification of the family lives of the various peoples and points out that the early Christians exhibited a greater convergence of doctrine and lifestyle than was ever the case in later years.

The Reformation and the rise of Protestantism caused a gradual change in the conception of the Church's absolute power over marriage and family life. The Protestant churches no longer recognized marriage as a sacrament and, although the Church retained a degree of control, legal power over marriage devolved upon the state. The marital bond came to be regarded as dissolvable in cases of adultery or breach of conjugal duties.

From the sixteenth century onwards, one sees further changes in views of the nature of marriage and family life gradually appearing in the writings of the humanists. A significant element in their thinking is the humanists' gradual emancipation from dogma and ecclesiastical authority concerning marriage and family life. Erasmus, for example, began to deviate from the Church's orthodoxy, adopting a critical stance towards the celibacy of the clergy, the indissolubility of the marital bond, virginity and the sacramental nature of wedlock (Kooy 1967:50). John Locke (Kooy 1967:50-51) too took a secular view of marriage. He held marriage in high esteem, but concluded that it ought to be governed by rationality and understanding and that the marital tie should depend on what the individuals meant to each other. On this view, matrimony is not a holy or sacramental tie, but a terminable personal commitment, although such termination should take place only after serious reflection. Voltaire (Kooy 1967:52-53) likewise believed that marriage was a personal matter and therefore not necessarily a lifelong commitment. Sound marital and family relationships were in the best interests of the state, he believed, since they diminish the incidence of crime, but the state ought not to be in a position to enforce sound family relationships — each couple was responsible for maintaining their own relationship as a constructive one. An inherent sensualizing and eroticizing of sexual relationships also developed parallel with these more secular views of marriage, although the churches clung to their antisensualist attitude.

This brief outline of some attitudes towards marriage and family life in earlier centuries is relevant to this study of family values among white and coloured people in the South African context. During group discussions and personal conversations with respondents and opinion-makers, Christian (or Biblical) values were regularly referred to, especially with regard to the permanence of marriage and norms dealing with sexual behaviour outside the institution of marriage.

A particular characteristic of the beliefs about marriage and the family outlined in the historical review above and discussed during the investigation is that the family as an

institution and the desirability of the family are not questioned. Marriage is seen as a divine institution, especially from the perspective of the Christian religion. The institution of the family came to be questioned only after the Industrial Revolution and the urbanization that accompanied it. This suggests that the integration of the family into industrialized urban society generated a high level of strain that ultimately made the family particularly vulnerable. This resulted in an escalation of family problems and family disorganization, putting the family in a problematic light and eventually causing its desirability as an institution to come under scrutiny.

In this context, Berger and Berger (1983:8-9) have shown that as early as the nineteenth century there were individuals who viewed the family as a problem. These can be divided into two groups: those with a negative view of the family and those with a more positive one. The negative view suggests that the family constitutes an obstacle to the realization of true freedom and the individuality of family members. The more positive view contends that, with certain necessary adaptations, the family will develop in such a way as to accommodate these ideals. A further important point made by Berger and Berger is that, since there is no unanimity as to what precisely is problematic, it is important to consider who the individuals are who define the family as a problem. It is suggested that a strong possibility exists that those who define the family as problematic will be found to be located in a very specific class position in society and that some of them may be found to have vested interests in the issue.

In sharp contrast to the negative view developed by some by the end of the nineteenth century, the end of the Second World War ushered in a phase during which a remarkably positive view of the family was reflected. This positive view is especially notable in the structural-functionalist paradigm, one of the foremost exponents of which was Talcott Parsons. Parsons's work, especially his influential *Family, socialization and interaction process*, (1955), influenced the thinking of an entire generation of family sociologists. He saw the family in the light of the process of structural differentiation, through which it admittedly lost certain functions, but also gained new ones and began specializing in these functions in addition to those which had survived from earlier. These new functions focused largely on the socialization of the child, as contributing to the stabilization of the adult personality and the development of the child's personality, and on the rights of individuals and their potential for self-realization. Parsons's work would appear to be a reflection of a particularly positive view of family life current in the 1950s and early 1960s. According to Berger and Berger (1983), several factors contributed to this view: the desires of the returning war veterans, the "baby boom", the new prosperity of the post-war period, the increase in social and geographic mobility for large sectors of the population, the development of new suburbs and possibly even the availability of contraceptives. In this context Berger and Berger (1983:15) remark:

> Whatever the reasons, the 1950s fostered a positive view of the American family — or, at any rate, of its ideal or normative form. This view, of course, was, once again, a middle-class view, but it percolated down to other strata as well. The middle-class family was perceived as, essentially, a success story, particularly in terms of Burgess' and Parsons' notions about the primacy of

> the individual and his or her personal needs. The family became increasingly child-centered — and that was supposed to be good. Women were to find their mission at home, as mothers and as the intelligent, emotionally sensitive companions to their husbands — and if they did not accept this mission, the psychologists were ready to treat this reluctance as a neurotic ailment.

This positive view of the family did not endure for long. According to Berger and Berger (1983:25-26), this success story was already being questioned by the late 1950s. It was argued that, no matter how enriching they might be, the new family functions entailed a great deal of strain and anxiety, especially for the middle-class woman. In the middle-class suburban areas, women were left very much to their own resources and found themselves in a social vacuum. Studies of the suburbs, notably William Whyte's *The organization man*, (1956) and Seeley, Sim and Loosley's *Crestwood Heights: a study of the culture of suburban life* (1956) began to highlight these problems and the success story of the new middle-class family gradually began to crumble.

The view that the family was facing serious problems was further strengthened by a number of changes it had undergone, together with phenomena that could be interpreted as signs of family disintegration. Age at marriage rose, the taboo against cohabitation began to lose its force, illegitimate births increased, married women entered the job market in growing numbers, the divorce rate rose sharply and the phenomenon of family violence came under scrutiny.

Many researchers interpreted these changes as signs that the family was in the process of collapse. Berger and Berger (1983:26) refer to the development of a widespread revolt against the family ideals of the previous decade — specifically against "privatism" and the cult of domesticity and its accompanying "oppression" — and the ideal of personal self-realization which received increasing emphasis. In response, increasing attention was focused also on alternative lifestyles which could replace marriage and the family and which could offer the possibility of a greater degree of self-realization. Some authors, such as Cooper (1971) and Laing (1971), who saw the family as a hotbed of oppression and pathology, actually went so far as to proclaim the "death" of the family.

In the long term, however, this insistence on the decline and "death" of the family appears to have been less deep-rooted than it originally appeared. As Berger and Berger (1983:27) point out, the authors of these works were living in environments where the turbulence was at its height and, in actual fact, it was largely confined to a small sector of the upper middle class. However, it was blown out of proportion by the mass media, which invariably seize on to a "good story".

The prophecies of doom were not accepted unopposed. For example, in 1976, Mary Jo Bane published an influential book under the title *Here to stay*. By analysing demographic and public opinion data, Bane reached the conclusion that Americans were more committed than ever before to family ties and that the family was here to stay. In *The good news is the bad news is wrong* (1985), Wattenberg shared this positive view. He claimed that there had

actually been less change than was generally accepted, that such change as had taken place had improved conditions, and that in the case of change that was, in fact, harmful, recovery was setting in.

In the same connection, Skolnick (1992) demonstrated that research had brought about a greater awareness of the family and the complexity of this apparently simple institution than had previously been the case. She points out that changes in the family took place in the past, that there has never been a generation that has not debated the crisis of the family, and that most present-day problems were problems in the past as well. In recent years modern research has brought the dark side of family life to public attention, together with an increasing concern about such issues as child abuse, family violence and incest. As Skolnick (1992:14) writes:

> The increased focus on such matters and on such other previously taboo topics as abortion and homosexuality may have contributed to the widespread sense that the family is falling apart. But what has actually happened is that public attention is now focused on matters that used to be shameful secrets. Thus, the fact that child abuse and other forms of family violence were "discovered" in the 1960s doesn't mean that they didn't exist before — or even that they have increased. Rather, our awareness of them, as well as our understanding of them, has changed.

In 1983 Berger and Berger (p. 164) also quoted research data indicating that the family was still enormously important to the individual. *Inter alia*, they showed that 92% of adult Americans still rated the family as their most important personal value, 83% would have welcomed more emphasis on traditional family bonds and 78% considered the family to be the most meaningful part of their life.

Having reviewed the changes the family had undergone and analysed the problem phenomena in the sphere of family life and the currents of academic and political thinking about these issues, Berger and Berger reached the conclusion that three major schools of thought had emerged — approaches that are still reflected in the literature of the early 1990s.

Although Berger and Berger's (1983:21) identification of schools of thought was based on an analysis of a constellation of American ideas and social forces, similar patterns developed in other Western countries. The Western media, Western foundations and cultural exchange programmes and Western tourism have successfully "exported" some of these problems to the Third World. It is thus reasonable to assume that family issues as manifested in Western countries, as well as the various interpretations attached to them, have been disseminated throughout the world and will be encountered in South Africa too.

The schools of thought referred to can briefly be described in this way:

1. The family and family values exhibit a high level of decline, which gives rise to concern as it is injurious to the individual and to society. Popenoe (1993a:527) considers that

there are two factors in this decline: on the one hand, the disintegration of the traditional family and, on the other, the degeneration of family values and the family as an institution. In this regard he claims:

> Recent family decline is more serious than any decline in the past because what is breaking up is the nuclear family, the fundamental unit stripped of relatives and left with two essential functions that cannot be better performed elsewhere: childrearing and the provision to its members of affection and companionship.

2. The family and family values exhibit a high level of decline, which is to be welcomed since the family is the locus of oppression and pathological phenomena.

3. The family is a robust and adaptable institution. Both the family and family values are in fairly good condition but, because of extensive social change, the family is facing serious problems which will worsen if nothing is done about them. Berger and Berger (1983:85-86) claim that this position is probably the one adopted by the majority of family analysts.

When analysing these three schools, it is important to note that, in spite of their conflicting interpretations — especially in the case of the two extreme positions — all three have a common empirical basis. We see, for example, that Stacey (1993:546) explicitly states that she interprets the origins and the meaning of the contemporary processes of family reconstitution entirely differently from Popenoe, although she shares Popenoe's concern about the poor prospects facing American children. It is specifically in the light of this that various authors have sounded a warning that the researcher's ideological orientation may well play a role in such interpretations.

A number of researchers, including Adams (1988), Skolnick (1992) and Miller (1993), have emphasized the issue of value-laden interpretation in this field. Referring to the problem of objectivity, Skolnick (1992:12) poses the question: "Which view is right? Is it possible to arrive at objective answers about the family? Even the researcher most dedicated to standards of scientific objectivity cannot avoid having deep emotional and moral responses to family issues."

Miller (1993:8) points more specifically to the fact that values may influence the theoretical perspectives of the researcher. His attitude is as follows: "Our values are reflected in our professional lives as shared preferences for one theoretical perspective or another, leading to biases in the facts we gather and believe ... I want to make the point that values are intractably embedded in our work, as I will illustrate using the example of adolescent pregnancy research." In the same context, Glenn (1993:544) makes a plea for commentators to base their assessments on evidence and keep them as free of ideological partiality as possible.

Cowan (1993:550) highlights an important point about the nature of the data on which theoreticians base their conclusions by pointing out the danger of misinterpretation if statistical census-type data are used exclusively. He points out that in the course of his own research, which involved in-depth interviews with both childless couples and couples with children, he found the generally negative feelings towards children and families which Popenoe (1993b) described as the new norm to be noticeably absent. Indeed, Cowan found that the vast majority of couples who had children had made major emotional investments in being the best possible parents while those couples who were voluntarily childless had taken their decision out of concern for the children they might have. His findings indicated that only a few individuals among those who had chosen to remain childless had done so because they had felt that having children would interfere with their personal growth, their careers or their marriages, although Popenoe (1993b) claimed that these attitudes were widespread. Cowan's more qualitative data thus cast serious doubt on Popenoe's (1993a) finding that familism as a value is declining.

We therefore believe that, when it comes to the longitudinal analysis of family tendencies and their interpretation, it is enormously important not to confine oneself to statistical census-type data extending over a period of time and showing, for instance, more divorces, fewer children per family, later marriages, more wives working outside the home and more cohabitation: the population's views and values should also be taken into account. Only if this is done will it be possible to determine whether the family is still seen as of value and, if so, exactly what the values are that support the family.

Before such a study of values can be attempted, it is essential to consider very carefully precisely what is understood by the concept "values" and how values are related to behaviour. We shall also examine the concept "family".

1.4 DEFINITION OF RELATED CONCEPTS

There are two concepts of particular importance for this study which therefore require precise definition: "values" and "family".

1.4.1 The concept "values"

During the 1950s the concept "values" occupied a relatively central position in the Parsonian school's analysis of social phenomena. However, a wide spectrum of meanings was coupled to the concept, and this complicates the task of providing a single definition of the concept.

A South African scholar, D.D. Joubert, has made a very comprehensive and penetrating analysis of the concept. His findings were published, *inter alia*, in his *Reflections on social values* (1992), and a later article based on this work entitled "Waardes, norme en standaarde: 'n begripsbepaling" (1995). In his 1992 book, Joubert presents an exhaustive analysis of the concept "values" as it is used by 25 separate practitioners of different disciplines. Not only does he make a noteworthy contribution to the clarification of the concept "values" and related concepts such as "norms" and "standards" but in his analyses he also indicates the

relationship between values, behaviour and environmental circumstances. Since Joubert's closely reasoned analyses produce very clear and workable definitions of the concepts in question, these will be accepted for the purposes of this study. All three concepts will be analysed since the meaning of "values" can be explained far more precisely if it is clearly distinguished from "norms" and "standards".

To begin with, Joubert (1995) shows that the concepts "values", "norms" and "standards" share *inter alia* the following characteristics:

- They are conceptions regarding social reality.
- They are often used synonymously in everyday speech.
- As concepts, they encapsulate ideas that can be reformulated.
- They have an evaluative component — judgments on quality, of good and bad, desirability and undesirability.
- They have a normative component — expectations and prescriptions as to what ought to be.
- They express the very human discrepancy and tension between the ideal and the real, between idea and action, principle and practice.
- Conceptualization and use of the terms assumes or implies a specific context of discourse, a view of societal normativity and a conception of social reality.

Against this background, we may now proceed to define the three concepts as follows:

VALUES are views of what is good and desirable in personal dispositions, social conduct, societal arrangements and cultural resources. Joubert (1992:2) states that he does not explicitly include the view that values serve as criteria for the selection of orientations because this is implied in the notion that values are ideas about what is desirable.

Values are **believed** in — or they are not.

NORMS, according to Joubert (1995:167-168), are patterns of behaviour that are generally expected. They may be more or less formal codes or unwritten rules — such as legal and organizational rules and regulations — or moral and ethical codes.

The effective functioning of these established codes of behaviour is largely ensured by the application of sanctions against offenders, which may range from public disapproval to the death penalty, when norms are broken. Since norms encompass both the laws of the state and generally accepted patterns of behaviour, it follows that sanctions, whether formal or informal, guarantee the efficacy of even diffuse norms (Joubert 1995:169).

Norms are **conformed** with — or they are not.

STANDARDS are criteria for quality of life; they are a measure of the quality of achievement in deed, thought and living conditions. Whether standards are achieved or not depends on the availability, accessibility and utilization of technical, social,

economic and cultural resources and, as goes without saying, on individual ability. According to Joubert (1995:168), standards are applicable to the following sectors in particular: production, labour, skilled trades, occupations and professionalism; teaching, education and training; and government and politics.

Standards are **aspired** to and **relied** on — or they are not.

Most people fail to distinguish clearly or consistently between *values*, *norms* and *standards*. For most people, *values constitute an appeal*, a call upon higher normative considerations which they believe to be correct, moral and necessary for an orderly and civilized life. Values are clearly the most general of principles and set broad guidelines for behaviour. This gives rise to the cardinal question as to the nature of the relationship between values and actual behaviour in the context of social reality.

Joubert (1995:168) conceives of social reality as the world of our everyday experience, constituted by the sustained triangular interaction of actions, circumstances and beliefs. (This last includes the category of values, norms and standards.) This means that each one of the three components — actions, circumstances and conceptions — constantly influences and affects the other two and is in turn influenced and affected by them. No one of the three is primarily decisive or determining. As a category of beliefs, these values, norms and standards are inextricably bound up with actions and circumstances, both influencing and being influenced, but never as the sole determining or determined factor, and seldom as the most important. Values are also moral principles that are often subscribed to, acknowledged, declaimed, lauded and believed, but less often applied and adhered to in decision-making and actions.

This, according to Joubert (1992:157), has resulted in uncertainty as to the exact role of values in behaviour; one hesitates to explain the decisions and actions of individuals in terms of the influence of values or the lack thereof. Values, as personal attitudes, do indeed become part of the personality in the lifelong socialization process and the repudiation of values that have become deeply internalized may cause individuals to experience feelings of shame and guilt. However, since people never become too old to change their minds about what is good and desirable for social life in general, values often take second place to preferences and prejudices, vested interests, established practices and the pragmatic demands of the situation. For example, in spite of a strong belief in the value of the permanence of marriage, an unacceptably high level of conflict in the marriage and the ensuing painful environmental circumstances may ultimately cause an individual to resort to divorce. This does not, however, mean that the person has once and for all lost faith in the value of matrimonial permanence, which may well be retained as an ideal to serve as a guideline for future behaviour. It therefore remains important to continue paying attention to values when analysing social phenomena and not summarily to dismiss them as irrelevant.

As this research deals specifically with values touching on the family, it is essential to examine the concept "family".

1.4.2 The concept "family"

The family normally forms the residential unit and constitutes the household. Those persons directly involved in the biological process of reproduction (in other words the man and woman between whom the biological process of mating and fertilization takes place), and their descendants born as a result of that process, play an important role in the family.

In the vast majority of societies a socially sanctioned relationship links the reproductive couple. This relationship is of a relatively permanent nature, is entered into through a set of rules and rites and is known as matrimony. The reproductive couple is required to undertake specific tasks in respect of the rearing and socialization of their offspring. Together these people form an important basic grouping residing in a specific locaiity and referred to as a nuclear family. Most definitions of the family to be found in the literature consider it an institution and are based on this notion of a man-woman-child(ren) nuclear family and the central function it performs. One of the best known and most frequently quoted definitions is that of Murdock (1947:1), who defines the family in this way:

> The family is a social group characterized by common residence, economic co-operation, and reproduction. It includes adults of both sexes, at least two of whom maintain a socially approved sexual relationship, and one or more children, own or adopted, of the sexually cohabiting adults.

This definition has evoked a great deal of criticism since not all the positions, functions and further requirements it lists (particularly economic co-operation and cohabitation) are necessarily present in the family in all societies.

After analysing family structures in certain societies that do not comply with all Murdock's requirements, Reiss (1965:449) proposed a general definition of the family which could accommodate all possible family structures as "a small kinship-structured group with the key function of nurturing socialization". This is a very broad definition which is able to accommodate a variety of family structures.

In the case of urban-industrial society, Goode (1963) claimed that there was an increasing tendency to view the nuclear family on the institutional level as the ideal family system. This tendency, he argued, was clearly reflected in textbooks and research reports dealing with the modern family. He also emphasized the suitability of the nuclear family for industrial societies.

At the same time he showed that the industrial system and the way in which the nuclear family fitted into it had resulted in manifold points of stress within the nuclear family, making it particularly vulnerable within the context of industrial society. This vulnerability found expression in the increased incidence of a variety of phenomena, such as illegitimate births (coupled with a tendency for unmarried mothers to keep their babies), cohabitation, divorce and remarriage, and a mushrooming of resultant alternative family types, such as the single-parent family, the modified extended family and the reconstituted family, which has given rise to concern about the survival of the nuclear family.

It is also important to note that those who express concern not only about the decline of the family but also about the family as an institution and family values are frequently thinking in terms of the nuclear family. One sees, for example, that Popenoe's (1993b) treatment of the decline of the family is concerned specifically with the nuclear family and more particularly with the traditional nuclear family in which the husband's role is that of breadwinner and the wife's that of home-maker. The criticism levelled against him is aimed precisely at his narrow conception of the family: it is argued that if the diversity of family forms is taken into account the family need no longer necessarily be seen as threatened with destruction. Stacey (1993:547) makes the point that "Family sociologists should take the lead in burying the ideology of 'the family' and in rebuilding a social environment in which diverse family forms can sustain themselves with dignity and mutual respect."

In view of these criticisms we have decided to accept the definition offered by Reiss (1965:449) for the purposes of this study. It is the broadest possible definition and thus makes provision for a variety of family types within a particular society. Furthermore, this study does not intend to draw conclusions about the survival or decline of the family from statistical tendencies. Instead it aims to ascertain from members of the population which values regarding the family they still hold to, which ones have changed or been discarded with the passage of time and which family type they feel to be the most appropriate for contemporary society. This necessitates a consideration of the methodological aspects of the study, which is provided in the following paragraph.

1.5 METHODOLOGICAL POINT OF DEPARTURE AND RESEARCH DESIGN

The research proposal states that, in order to obtain insight into and describe people's beliefs about the family (and family values) and the problems facing the institution, use will be made of unstructured interviews, focus groups and group discussions.

1.5.1 Methodological point of departure

When selecting the methodological point of departure and research design for a study of family values, it is important to consider certain aspects of the nature of values.

Joubert (1995:170) points out that, for positivists, the exact determination of values as evaluative-normative conceptions is an impossible undertaking. He further shows that the more humanistic social scientists, who — like most people — do hold to values, refrain from making superficial generalizations and absolute statements about the operation of values for individuals and societies. **They share the conviction that values are moral principles that are often endorsed, confessed, declaimed, extolled and believed, but less often lived out or applied in making decisions and determining actions.**

Joubert (1992:47-48) also points out that values, beliefs, ideas and conceptions of what is desirable exist in the human mind, cannot be observed directly and cannot be verified in terms of self-evident characteristics. Nor, since they are ideas, can values be defined with finality.

Instead, the validity of all definitions of values is wholly dependent on the degree and extent of consensus reached with regard to formal definitions within the specific context of the discourse. Since everyday conversations do not take place in terms of formal definitions, it is understandable that the conceptions of values in everyday use are diffuse.

A significant problem that Rescher (Joubert 1992:52) considers as playing an important role in the definition and study of values is the question of how values are manifested. Rescher understands "manifestation of values" as the endorsement or attribution of values through speech or action. If the notion of manifestation of values can be extended, one may generalize that values are manifested in various contexts. These contexts vary from informal everyday speech and conversation to spaces which are chosen and constructed for the purpose of investigating the occurrence and attributes of values.

Joubert (1992:62) points out that a further dimension that must be taken into account when researching values is the fact that the use of the word "desirable" implies an element of social normativity. In other words, using the term constitutes an expression of what is good and desired by many for the well-being of personalities, social life, society and culture. He also indicates that researchers are free to include their personal wishes, desires and opinions in what they conceive of as values, but only with two provisos that are essential requirements for research into values. These are: (1) a carefully expressed definition of the phenomenon that is central to the research (in the present case, the family) and (2) clarity as to whether the respondents necessarily share this idea of values.

In his analysis of the definition of the concept "value" and of the methods used to investigate values by the 25 researchers he examined, Joubert (1992:56) demonstrates that these researchers mainly made use of four methods:

1. Conceptions of values were operationalized and individual respondents were interrogated about their values in interviews and through questionnaires.
2. Values were determined by analysing documentary material (the historical procedure).
3. Values were determined through logical reasoning and logical theorizing.
4. Values were deduced or identified by investigating the actual behaviour of people.

It has already been pointed out that if one wishes to determine the nature of family values in South Africa — which values support quality family life and whether family values are still believed in — it is more appropriate to obtain the necessary information from the population itself rather than to draw conclusions from statistical tendencies. It was therefore decided to follow a qualitative approach in this research by conducting unstructured in-depth interviews in a group context in various centres in the country.

In this regard it may be mentioned that Joubert (1992) considers the qualitative approach to be particularly suited to research into values. He points out (1995:70) that the information about values that is obtained through the completion of formally structured questionnaires is very limited. He also points out that, given the spectrum of connotations that may be attached

to them, values cannot be separated into or identified as single factors and variables. Strictly empirical research into values seldom constitutes more than reports that respondents indicated a belief in specific values and that the specified values correlated in general with these respondents' patterns of action, other beliefs and circumstances. In fact, Joubert (1995:170-171) concludes that research into values that is undertaken by means of surveys and questionnaires often exhibits not only the statistical sophistication of public opinion polls but also unfortunately the superficiality of their findings.

The shortcomings of the questionnaire method are very apparent if one proceeds from the symbolic interactionist view that people in interaction with each other use shared symbols to give meaning to their own behaviour, to construct (and in time to reconstruct) their own social life-worlds. If this is the case, the questionnaire may fail miserably in penetrating to the fundamental values in people's lives. Such questionnaires may possibly be based solely on those values that are relevant within the researcher's own life-world or have become apparent through a study of the literature. Consequently they may prove incapable of uncovering important values in the respondents' life-worlds. It thus seems far more desirable to adopt a qualitative approach which allows the respondents to express the values that are relevant in their own life-worlds. This, after all, is precisely the aim of "qualitative" research — to determine the views of ordinary people. Joubert (1992:95) makes the following comment in this connection:

> Observation and reflection centre on the behaviour of ordinary people, but even more on their views, ideas, interpretations, "definitions of situations", values — in short, their **beliefs** ... Perhaps this is the greatest contribution that "qualitative" analysis has made to social science: the recognition that what people think, is as important as what they do; that behaviour cannot be fully understood without at the same time understanding beliefs — and social circumstances. And this also applies to value beliefs — perhaps especially values.

According to Bryman (Joubert 1992:96), the *sine qua non* of qualitative research is the researcher's commitment to seeing the social world from the acting person's point of view — and this is precisely what this study intends to do in the matter of family values.

1.5.2 Research design

In 1994 Viljoen completed a study which investigated, *inter alia*, values in the marriages and family life of black South Africans. On the basis of this study, and in the light of escalating family disintegration in South Africa, in that same year the Department of Welfare requested research into the values supporting quality marital and family life among coloured and white people. The intention was to extend the research to the Asian cultural group in South Africa as funds became available.

When planning research into the family values prevailing in South Africa, it is important to bear in mind the considerable diversity in the country with regard to family life, both between and within the various cultural groups. Major differences between the groups can be observed in respect of initial family structures, support networks and normative behavioural patterns and values in family life. However, the economic and political circumstances to which each cultural group has been (and is) subject have also differed significantly, as have the ways in which each was historically drawn into the processes of industrialization and urbanization and the ways in which these changes affected the family life of each group.

The differing circumstances of the various cultural groups resulted in the appearance within each group of a set of differential variables which influenced family life in each of the specific cultural groups in a unique way. Directly resultant were strains and problems unique to each group. We see, for example, that trends in existing statistics, showing *inter alia* increases in the divorce rate, family violence, illegitimate births, child neglect and cohabitation, indicate that family life is subject to growing pressure and disintegration in all the cultural groups. However, these problematic phenomena are more intense and extensive in some cultural groups than in others (see Steyn, Van Wyk & Le Roux 1989:121-126). In fact, some of the cultural groups exhibit an alarming escalation in family disintegration that may have implications for the maintenance of family values.

Since this research is an investigation of the family values of the coloured and white cultural groups, it is important to take note of certain of the characteristics of family life in these two groups.

White family life is rooted in Western European family life as influenced by Christianity. Although there is a paucity of detailed information on the family life of whites in their early days in South Africa, such indications as there are point to large families who were firmly anchored in a wider kinship network, the neighbourhood and church life and who were subject to strict social control. Little family disorganization seems to have been present. Marital power was in the hands of the husband, who was the undisputed head of the household (Keyter 1940; Cronjé & Venter 1958). As had been the case in Europe during an earlier period, the industrialization and urbanization which took place in South Africa, especially after the Second World War, brought about drastic changes in white family life. One of these changes was the large-scale loosening of the nuclear family's kinship bonds so that it began functioning as an independent and autonomous unit. However, industrial-urban life subjected this nuclear family to a good deal of pressure and it became highly vulnerable, resulting in a concomitant escalation in the divorce rate from 5,9 per 1 000 existing marriages in 1955 to 16,4 in 1980 and 15,5 in 1993 (Central Statistical Service 1993).

The circumstances in which the coloured family took shape differ fundamentally from those applying to the white family. In its early history, the coloured family was to a very large extent subjected to circumstances similar to those of the African American. These were characterized by a fairly unstable family life and an extremely high illegitimate birth rate. Major differences in family life are apparent between the different social classes among the coloured people. For example, nuclear families characterized by a male-dominant or syncratic

pattern of authority occur more frequently in the upper social class. In the lower social class, however, the single-parent family or the modified extended family exhibiting a female-dominant pattern is conspicuous. The divorce rate is lower among coloureds than among whites — 8,7 per 1 000 existing marriages in 1984, rising to 12,5 in 1993. However, this figure is not necessarily an accurate reflection of the true extent of family disorganization in this group, since a high level of cohabitation and desertion exists in the lower social classes (Steyn 1961; Central Statistical Service 1993).

These differences make it clear that the choice of respondents for any analysis of family values in South Africa ought to provide for the inclusion of persons from the different cultural groups as well as from the relevant social classes. However, since the mandate for this research was to analyse the family values of coloureds and whites, only these two groups were included in the research.

When it came to selecting respondents from the coloured and white cultural groups, it was decided to conduct in-depth interviews in group context. It was assumed that people in groups, engaged in free conversation about family values, would bring up those issues which were of fundamental importance to them and spontaneously air their views on issues they felt to be important in respect of family life and what is desirable in it.

In the initial exploratory stage of the research, meetings were arranged with experts in the fields of social work and marriage counselling in order to discuss the essence of the research design and to obtain an indication of contact persons or institutions who could be asked to co-operate in the constitution of focus groups.

In the light of these discussions, a brief questionnaire was drawn up to assist in contextualizing the groups. The questionnaire was intended to provide information on the age, gender and educational qualifications of the respondents so that groups could be constituted in terms of different generations and so that a rough indication of socio-economic class could be arrived at. Two open questions were included to provide the group members with the opportunity to indicate their opinions as to (1) the most important values and factors that played a role in building healthy family life and (2) the most important factors in the development of serious family and marital problems.

The next stage of the research consisted of visits to centres in various parts of the country by the project leader. The purpose of these visits was to recruit contact persons or opinion makers who could be of assistance in forming the groups. During these visits it became clear that certain times of the year would not be suitable for conducting group discussions — during school holidays, for example, or in the winter months when it would be difficult to arrange successful group meetings during the evenings.

In forming these groups, particular attention was paid to the following aspects:

1. Cultural group: It was necessary to make provision for both coloured and white groups.

2. Language: As language can be an indicator of culture and cultural differences between groups, provision needed to be made for both English-medium and Afrikaans-medium groups for both coloureds and whites.

3. Social class: Social class may also be an indicator of differences in values. For this reason it was necessary to make provision for, at least, groups drawn from a lower as well as groups from a higher socio-economic class. The criteria for differentiating between the lower and higher classes were literacy, level of education and occupation, which are generally recognized in sociology as the most significant criteria for class differentiation.

4. Generation: Care was taken to form groups within each cultural group to represent the various generations. For this reason, specific groups were formed consisting of grandparents while other groups comprised parents who were still actively practising parenthood, or young people who were as yet unmarried. The assumption underlying this decision was that every generation had, in fact, lived in the context of a family or still did so and was consequently bound to hold opinions on what was desirable in the family context. In the light of these factors, certain groups were constituted (see Table 1).

The table makes it clear that the attempt to form English and Afrikaans groups for both coloureds and whites was successful, thanks to the help of the contact persons in the various regions. In respect of classes, it is also clear that groups of lower- and middle-class Afrikaans-speaking coloureds were constituted. However, in spite of explicit requests to the contact persons, lower-class groups could not be formed among English-speaking coloureds. Among the whites, only one lower-class Afrikaans-speaking group was formed, and none consisting of English speakers. Considering the fact that coloured people are mainly Afrikaans-speaking, together with the fact that roughly 80% of them fall within the lower socio-economic stratum (Terreblanche 1977:16), it was easier to constitute groups among this segment of the population than among English-speaking coloureds or among whites. However, it must be viewed as a weakness of the study that neither English- nor Afrikaans-speaking lower-class white groups were included. This point ought to receive specific attention in further studies on the subject.

Twenty-two of the groups specified in the table consisted exclusively of women, three consisted exclusively of men and 63 comprised a mixture of men and women. Eight of the groups were made up of professional people drawn from the service sector, such as nurses, teachers and social workers. The rationale for including groups consisting exclusively of professional people is that they practise occupations in which values can be passed on to other people, and their values are considered important.

TABLE 1: DISTRIBUTION OF GROUPS INTERVIEWED

Group	Coloured		White		Mixed	
	Afr.	Eng.	Afr.	Eng.	Afr.	Eng.
Lower class						
Grandparents	4	–	–	–	–	–
Parents	12	–	1	–	–	–
Young people	4	–	–	–	–	–
Middle class						
Grandparents	2	–	5	8	–	–
Parents	10	3	10	8	3	2
Young people	6	1	4	3	–	1
TOTAL	**38**	**4**	**20**	**19**	**3**	**3**

Groups were assembled in Gauteng, in Bloemfontein and Fauresmith (Free State), Cape Town, Stellenbosch, George, Knysna and Oudtshoorn (Western Cape), Port Elizabeth and the surrounding rural area (Eastern Cape) and Durban and Pietermaritzburg (KwaZulu-Natal). In one or two cases, groups which had been arranged failed to materialize, but thanks to the outstanding co-operation of the contact persons in the various centres, a sufficient number of groups was constituted to ensure that the field work could be successfully concluded.

It has already been emphasized that the group interviews were conducted without the assistance of a structured interview guide. Instead, each group discussion was approached with a completely open agenda and the groups were given the freedom to bring up any aspect of marriage or family life that they regarded as important. The purpose of the research was explained to each group in detail. Each group was assured that the information it provided would be kept completely confidential in the sense that no names of respondents would be mentioned in the research report. They were also assured that there were no right or wrong answers on any topic and reminded that the researchers were interested in their honest views on family values. So as to stimulate discussion, at the beginning of a session the group members were often asked if they still regarded marriage as important and then requested to provide the reasons for their answers. This approach very quickly induced a spontaneous discussion. On occasion, the researchers asked for more specific information on a particular subject and attempted to probe it in greater depth. Generally, this was done when a topic was touched on in passing, without the group dealing with it further. For example, it sometimes happened that communication between husband and wife was mentioned as being important, but without any details being provided. The researchers would then attempt to elicit greater depth of information by asking how the group understood "communication" and what the nature of communication between

husband and wife ought to be. This method of taking careful note of topics mentioned only in passing and then returning to them provided particularly valuable information.

Each group discussion lasted roughly an hour — sometimes slightly more and sometimes slightly less. At the end of each group discussion, the members of the group were asked to complete the short questionnaire already mentioned.

Permission was asked of each group to make a tape recording of the discussion. In addition, one of the researchers made field notes during the discussion itself. On completion of the field work, these tapes were transcribed and the transcriptions were used in conjunction with the field notes for the purposes of analysis.

During the group discussions themselves, certain topics came to the fore repeatedly and these topics proved useful for analysing and systematizing the data collected. These topics form the basis of the structure of the following chapters.

CHAPTER 2

GENERAL VALUES SUPPORTING QUALITY FAMILY LIFE

2.1 INTRODUCTION

As was pointed out in the last chapter, it was decided to make use of unstructured group interviews for identifying those values which support quality family life. This decision was taken in the belief that those family values that are regarded as important would be raised and discussed spontaneously by the groups. It soon became obvious during the interviews that this assumption was valid and that, once group discussion had been initiated, members of the groups spoke freely and spontaneously about their beliefs as to what is good and desirable in their personal attitudes, social actions, social arrangements and cultural resources — in other words, values — in respect of marriage and family life.

It was quickly apparent that the groups would not confine their discussions to values *per se*, since group members included their personal experiences and behaviour in the discussions. They also frequently spoke of the circumstances that influenced their behaviour when it seemed to conflict with their values. A strong note of realism concerning circumstances and their influence on actual behaviour was thus also apparent in the group discussions.

When the data were analysed, it also became clear that, although individuals in the groups often spelled out their values explicitly (which made them easily identifiable for the researchers), this was not always the case. It was necessary on occasion for the researchers to infer values from the way in which group members discussed actual behaviour and hesitated over the question of what the correct behaviour in a specific situation would be. One example of this concerned the question of whether young unmarried girls ought to obtain contraceptives from clinics and the implications this had for the value of premarital chastity. At times it was also necessary to infer values from discussions of behaviour that was apparently damaging to family relationships and from criticism levelled at such behaviour. An example that serves to illustrate this is the statement that no third person should be involved in a marital relationship, from which the value of exclusivity can be inferred.

Because of this, it was necessary when analysing the data not only to take note of explicitly stated values but also to be sensitive to the implicit values which could be inferred from discussions of actual behaviour and the disapproval expressed in such discussion. The analysis of the data does not, therefore, concentrate exclusively on such family values as were explicitly stated. Where necessary, attention is also paid to the actual behaviour of individuals in value-laden situations and the circumstances which, in their view, did (or would) influence actual behaviour.

An interesting phenomenon relating to certain values became apparent during some of the interviews: respondents did not actually appeal to the values concerned when explaining their actions but instead often resorted to a justification or rationalization as to why a specific value was considered important. This occurred especially when respondents discussed their belief in

the desirability of marrying and living in a family context. The analytical approach adopted entails a consideration not only of values in the analysis but also, where applicable, of the actions and circumstances which the respondents claimed could, or would, play a role in their behaviour. It enables the research to emphasize the interdependence of deeds (social action), beliefs (including values) and circumstances (relevant social conditions or environments) that constitute the three components of the ontological dimension of social reality. This coincides with the view attributed to Joubert (1992) in the previous chapter.

Considering the nature of values, it was necessary in this study to ensure that the values identified were, to some extent, common and not simply individual opinions expressed by a single member of one of the groups. This does not, however, indicate an attempt at quantification. Instead, during the analysis, it was necessary continually to consider whether the same beliefs were present in different groups in their specific contexts. In cases where a specific value could repeatedly be identified in different groups, a careful check was made to determine whether there were groups or individuals who disagreed with the specific belief and, if so, the nature of the difference of opinion. Lastly, during the group interviews and in the analysis of the data, attempts were made to determine whether changes were apparent in family values with the passage of time.

During the group discussions and with the initial analysis of the data it became clear that, although the groups did not always raise exactly the same issues, there were certain specific themes that were generally discussed in most of the groups. The most important of these were:

- Values relating to family life in general.
- Values relating to the husband-wife relationship.
- Values relating to the parent-child relationship.
- Values relating to sex education, premarital sexual intercourse and illegitimate births.
- Problems experienced in marriage and family life and the necessity of marriage and family counselling.

Although these themes were not all necessarily raised in every group, each one was thoroughly discussed in a variety of groups. Some of the groups discussed specific themes in greater depth than the other themes, but in the long run, all the themes were discussed in depth by a number of different groups. An analysis will be made of these themes in this and the following chapters.

2.2 GENERAL BELIEF IN THE SURVIVAL OF MARRIAGE AND FAMILY LIFE

One issue that was discussed in practically all the groups was the question of whether marriage and family life is still regarded as important and held to be desirable and valuable. The fact that practically all the groups had something to say on this issue can probably be attributed to the researchers' using it as a starting point for initiating group discussions. This

issue was deliberately chosen as the starting point because, as was explained in the last chapter, it is such a controversial question in the literature on the Western family.

It is unquestionable that most participants in all the groups held the opinion that marriage and family life is still a very important institution and is regarded as valuable. Although individuals sometimes questioned this belief, there was not a single group as such that expressed the opinion that marriage and family life were being phased out and were no longer seen as important in society.

This faith in marriage and family life was expressed in several ways. Statements made in this context include the following:

- Marriage and family life are important.
- There is still a belief in marriage and family life.
- The family will not be phased out of society.
- We ought not to become so modern that we want to throw everything away.
- The family is the most important thing in a man's (woman's) life and life without his wife (her husband) and children is unthinkable.

The reasons advanced for marriage and family life being considered the desirable pattern in society and likely to survive in the future can be divided into four broad categories, depending on whether they are based on social, religious, procreative or more personal and individualistic factors.

2.2.1 Societal factors

Reasons based on social factors included the assertion that the family forms the basis and core of society, that the family constitutes a mini-society — a microcosm of the macrocosm — and is where children learn, under their parents' guidance, to live with others and to become fully fledged members of society.

Families are also seen as a binding factor: they are safe havens providing security and permanence where the most important social values are imparted to children.

In contrast to the above position on the social value of marriage and family life, individuals in a few groups expressed the opinion that there is no longer such strong social pressure for people to marry and have children. In this regard, a young coloured man stated bluntly that people have a far freer choice today as to whether to marry or not.

2.2.2 Religious factors

When advancing reasons from a religious viewpoint, people generally emphasized that marriage and the family were divine institutions, gifts of God, and that, if one married and had children, that was God's plan for one's life. It was also suggested, however, that the religious foundation for marriage and family life had been considerably stronger in the past and that it was becoming more superficial. Some of the following statements were made repeatedly:

- If your relationship with God is not right, your marriage does not have a good chance of success.
- It is God who binds people together in marriage.
- Practising religion as a family makes the family a strong unit.
- Families that pray together, stay together.
- Religion is the foundation of a successful marriage and family life.

Clearly, not only are marriage and the family seen as gifts from God: it is also believed that where marriage has a religious basis — a thought that was repeatedly expressed in the group discussions as: "I and my house, we shall serve the Lord" — it will be lasting, and fundamentally sound.

A noticable point to emerge in the analysis of the issue of values and factors which (according to group members) contribute to building a healthy family life, was the following numbers of people in the respective categories spontaneously mentioning religion as an important factor:

Lower-class coloureds: 31 (28,2%)
Middle-class coloureds: 33 (20,5%)
Mixed group: 43 (63,2%)
Afrikaans-speaking whites: 76 (54,7%)
English-speaking whites: 42 (27,5%)

During the group discussions, only two individuals — in two separate groups — explicitly stated they did not believe religion was necessarily a particularly important factor. Both individuals said they were aware of marriages and families that were not religious but were nevertheless happy. According to a young English-speaking woman, marriage is still a popular institution, even among non-Christians.

It would thus seem that religion is seen as a value underpinning the creation of healthy marriage and family life.

2.2.3 Procreative factors

Broadly speaking, the procreative factors advanced indicated that humankind has a desire to reproduce and have children in order, *inter alia*, that there be heirs. Life is seen as so much richer if it is shared and parenting is a joint endeavour. Where the importance of children was stressed, there was an accompanying belief that children ought to be born within the context of a marriage and brought up in a family. Although there were two instances of people who stated their preference for remaining unmarried and bringing up their children themselves, it was generally accepted that it is extremely difficult for a single person to bring up children and that a child ought to have both a father and a mother.

2.2.4 Personal and individualistic factors

The reasons reflecting a more personal and individualistic viewpoint tended to focus on the personal needs and desires of the individual. From this perspective, the following points were emphasized:

- People are gregarious and are not intended to live a solitary existence.
- People want to be involved with other people.
- People ought to stand together and support each other.
- The family provides in these needs.

For these reasons, people want to marry so as to obtain a mate with whom they can share their feelings and be happy, someone to give them a sense of security, someone without whom they would be lonely and — especially — would have to face a lonely old age.

This particular sentiment of wanting a mate came so strongly to the fore that in one of the groups of lower-class coloureds among whom it was clear there was a high incidence of family violence, one woman reacted to the researcher's query as to whether one would want to be in such a violent marriage with the remark (in Afrikaans), "Yes, but after all, one wants a mate."

Some of the groups also indicated that people need to belong, and that the family is the place where this need is fulfilled.

The general picture emerging is one of people's need for primary relationships — to be members of a primary group — and the belief that the family can provide in this need at a basic level.

2.3 AMBIVALENCES AND UNCERTAINTIES REGARDING MARRIAGE AND FAMILY LIFE

In spite of the overall belief in the continuing viability of marriage and family life that was found in all the groups — coloured as well as white, English- and Afrikaans-speaking — there were also individuals in each of these groups who were ambivalent in their beliefs, expressed uncertainties and indicated that marriage and family life face problems that need to be dealt with. A woman in one of the middle-class coloured parents' groups expressed this particularly clearly when she suggested that everybody strived to have an ideal family but that, in reality, so many factors influenced the family that the ideal could not always be achieved.

Ambivalent feelings noted about marriage and family life may be categorized under the following subheadings:

2.3.1 Fears for the disappearance of marriage and family life

Uncertainties and fears for the future of married and family life were expressed chiefly in the grandparental groups. For example, one woman in a grandparents' group stated that the

family was on its way out and that she could see this in her own family. However, she added that she was praying that God would prevent family life from disintegrating because the future of the nation and society depended on it. Another person, also a member of a grandparents' group, was of the opinion that while their generation thought that their values had been lost, the younger generation thought they were firmly in control. Perhaps, she suggested, one should view this as a shift in values to fit in with changed circumstances and not necessarily as the breakdown of values. It was, however, clear that she felt that the older generation attached more value to religion, marriage and the family. Another opinion expressed in this regard was that members of the grandparents' generation exhibited a far stronger commitment to marriage than did the younger generation and were more willing to exert themselves so as to make a success of marriage.

2.3.2 Ambivalent feelings about entering into matrimony

Ambivalent feelings and uncertainties were also voiced in many of the groups consisting largely of young unmarried people. One of the arguments that came out strongly in these groups was that the participants would like to marry and that they fantasized about the perfect marriage, but they were also hesitant and uncertain whether they wanted to get married at all. This was not only because they were uncertain about the country's future: they were also not convinced that a successful marriage was possible — concerned that they might marry the wrong person. These concerns gave rise to a number of opinions about what one should take into account when considering whether to marry.

It was suggested, for example, that people ought not to marry merely because they felt a romantic attachment, but ought to make certain that they truly loved the person concerned; that they should also avoid marrying because of social pressure — meaning that when all their friends were married, they would begin to wonder if they should not get married as well. The view was expressed that the norm has changed today: there is no longer a social stigma attached to being single, and whether to marry or not is a personal choice. Under these circumstances, the decision to get married ought to be weighed up very carefully in the light of the following considerations:

- One ought not to marry too young nor have only romantic thoughts about one's wedding day.
- One must get to know the person one wants to marry very well and make sure one is compatible with him/her.
- One must get to know the person's family and background.
- Parents ought to be consulted in making the decision to marry.
- One must make sure that both parties share the same values.
- Adequate finances must be available for beginning married life and especially for starting a family.
- One should obtain clarity on important issues, including finances and children, before entering into marriage.

In one of the groups (white matric pupils) where all the members indicated that they wished to marry, considerable uncertainty as to whether the marriage would succeed was apparent; specifically, uncertainty about marrying the right person. The young people's opinion was that children suffered most in a divorce and they did not wish to subject children to this. For this reason, if they should marry, they would prefer to wait a few years to make certain that the marriage was working before thinking about having children.

This suggests a strong awareness among young people that romantic love is unrealistic, that getting married and making the relationship succeed constitutes a challenge and that, in order to succeed, one has to be committed to working hard at the marital relationship and family life.

Apart from this uncertainty and pessimism about their ability to handle marriage successfully on the part of a number of group members, a few of the groups also included individuals who had no wish to marry. One young man in a group of coloured middle-class high school pupils vehemently expressed his desire to remain single on the grounds that marriage entailed too many responsibilities and that he wanted to enjoy his life. This sentiment was echoed by a few other members of the group. There were also two young girls in the same group who did not consider marriage an option, instead giving preference to developing their careers. In a few cases, young people stated their unwillingness to marry on the grounds that they came from unhappy homes themselves and had no wish to see the cycle repeat itself. One coloured woman in a group of parents indicated that she was unmarried, had a baby and did not need a husband to care for the child. Consequently, she had no wish to marry. A few women who had been widowed indicated their unwillingness to remarry on the grounds that it was too risky.

Although there were instances of individuals being opposed to marriage, there was not a single case where the entire group expressed opposition to marriage. In those instances where members expressed opposition to marriage, other members responded by pointing out that happy marriages did exist and that people still prized a happy marriage and family life. They also indicated that children coming from a happy family had a more positive attitude towards the possibility of a happy marriage and family. However, children from unhappy families also still hoped and believed that they could have happy marriages.

To summarize, it may be claimed that, although there is a strong belief in the lasting nature of marriage and family life together with a high level of utopian ideas of what constitutes a happy family life, it must also be accepted that, even among young people, there is a strong streak of realistic awareness of the obstacles that can arise in marriage and family life. There was also a realization that making a success of marriage and family life was a challenge that demanded hard work. It is thus clear that people distinguished between the ideal and reality — a distinction also apparent when it comes to all the other family values.

2.4 THE VALUE OF PERMANENCE IN MARRIAGE

The next value to be discussed is that of the permanence of the marital relationship. This seems necessary given the level of scepticism expressed, especially by members of the

grandparents' groups, about the survival or possible disintegration of marriage and family life, as well as the degree of uncertainty about the possibility of successful marriage expressed by the young people. The issue of permanence in marriage was, in fact, repeatedly raised in a large variety of groups.

In all the groups where this issue came up, the ideal expressed by all the members was that the marital relationship ought to be a permanent one and that they believed in the value of permanence. In other words, marriage is seen as indissoluble, a view that has its basis in religious beliefs. Some of the remarks made in this connection were:

- The Bible does not permit divorce.
- Marriage is a union in God's eyes and therefore endures "until death us do part".
- People are held together by the grace of God. (This was said by a coloured woman who had been married to a man with a drinking problem for many years.)

The value of permanence was particularly strongly emphasized by members of the grandparents' groups and people with a strong religious orientation. One member of a grandparents' group specifically stated that marriage was permanent and that he had never considered divorce — his family had been the centre of his existence and he wished it to remain so. Those individuals who emphasize the value of permanence accept that problems and conflict occur in a marriage, but believe that one is committed to maintaining the marriage and must therefore work at it. In one grandparents' group, the remark was made that their generation did not get divorced easily. They had also faced conflict and crises in their time, but they talked them through and had been given grace to deal with the crises: the young people of today lack this perseverance.

A coloured woman in a parents' group remarked (in Afrikaans), "I can't divorce him, because he has taken my honour". What she meant was that, since her husband was the first man with whom she had had sexual intercourse, she was obliged to stay with him. In another discussion, in a coloured grandparents' group, an old woman spoke of how badly her husband of 47 years treated her, and explained that she had not left him because her father had forbidden her to divorce her husband.

However, as far as this issue is concerned, there has been a great deal of change. Although people still enter into marriage with the perception that it is a permanent commitment, it is increasingly believed that a marriage may be terminated if this is justified by the circumstances. The view is adopted that, in previous generations, society exerted pressure on couples to stay together, whereas now people stay together from choice. This means that there is a more pragmatic attitude among some people: "We will get married but, if it doesn't work out, we can always get divorced." Some of the factors mentioned as capable of making a marriage intolerable in the long term were poor communication, infidelity, irreconcilable personal differences, and circumstances such as alcoholism, drug abuse, crime and violence in the family. In this context, a number of people in certain groups expressed the opinion that they would not be prepared to throw their lives away by remaining in an unhappy situation: for the sake of survival, divorce is sometimes necessary and may bring about an immeasurable

improvement in a previously intolerable situation. One person summed the situation up neatly and undramatically by pointing out that one remained in a relationship for as long as the rewards exceeded the costs. If the costs become too great, or if an acceptable alternative exists, one will leave the relationship. This view is indicative of a intensely pragmatic view of the issue.

Those who support the value of permanence do, however, believe that people who enter into marriage committed to its success — with this as a value — have a greater chance of success than do those who lack this commitment, since the latter will not put as much into the marriage as the former.

In summary, it can perhaps be stated that people still hold to the value of permanence in marriage and that a high divorce rate does not necessarily indicate that people no longer believe in the institution of marriage. They are, however, willing to countenance divorce when this is justified by the circumstances. In this connection, the following points were made:

- It is easier to get divorced today.
- Public opinion is no longer so strongly opposed to divorce today.
- People do not marry for the right reasons, so they get divorced more easily.
- Since women have been able to earn their own living, they are no longer as dependent on their husbands' incomes as formerly. This makes it easier for them to resume their own independent lives than used to be the case.
- Early marriages carry a high risk — people change dramatically between the ages of 18 and 25 and often become less suited to one another. (This was said by a man in a white parents' group.)

2.5 THE VALUE OF EXCLUSIVITY

It was mentioned in the previous paragraph that one of the factors contributing to a marriage becoming intolerable and resulting in divorce was the infidelity of a spouse. This statement immediately focuses attention on the value of exclusivity in a Western monogamous type of marriage. Many of the groups in all the different contexts did, in fact, raise the value of remaining faithful to one's spouse to the exclusion of any other party.

The view expressed on this issue by the groups was that when one entered into marriage, one made a binding commitment and there was no room for a third person in the marriage. A man in an Afrikaans-speaking group expressed this by stating that it was unthinkable that a man should be unfaithful to his wife, and that he could not understand a married man falling in love with another woman.

Another concept which was discussed in close association with marital fidelity was that of trust. The opinion was expressed that one of the factors on which a healthy marriage depended was mutual trust. The response "trust" occurred with a relatively high frequency in

answer to the question on the questionnaire as to which factors were conducive to the development of a healthy family life. This response is indicated by the following figures:

Lower-class coloureds: 34 (30,9%)
Middle-class coloureds: 48 (29,8%)
Mixed group: 17 (25,0%)
Afrikaans-speaking whites: 36 (25,9%)
English-speaking whites: 43 (28,1%)

In spite of the emphasis placed on faithfulness and trust, respondents identified unfaithfulness as a very real marital problem. In some groups, it was suggested that if a man went out on his own in the evenings, he might be having a relationship with another woman. The value of marital fidelity appeared with notable regularity in group discussions with coloureds. It was mentioned in more than one group that "granny" used to say that infidelity was a greater destroyer of marriages than alcohol: "You can drag a drunken man into your house by his feet, but one who sleeps with another woman can't keep a family together."

The general response to the question as to how one would react on discovering that one's spouse was guilty of infidelity was that it would lead to a divorce. It was suggested in only one group that one ought to give the person another chance and that an effort should be made to improve the marriage.

As the following figures indicate, a fairly high proportion of respondents identified infidelity as a factor that could lead to serious marital problems:

Lower-class coloureds: 19 (17,3%)
Middle-class coloureds: 26 (16,1%)
Mixed group: 19 (27,9%)
Afrikaans-speaking whites: 21 (15,1%)
English-speaking whites: 21 (13,7%)

The fact that people perceived marital infidelity as a serious marital problem obviously did not necessarily mean that they had personally experienced it in their own marriages. It simply indicates that they asserted that, if they were to experience it, it would constitute a serious problem.

The fact that the importance of marital fidelity and trust was emphasized in all the groups that discussed the issue, and that infidelity was regarded as a problem, indicated that exclusivity in a marital relationship was still regarded as an important value. It is true that the possibility of condoning it in order to salvage the marriage was mentioned, but there was not a single case of approval or acceptance of infidelity.

2.6 THE VALUE OF FAMILY UNITY

An aspect of marriage and family life that, although not discussed in all the groups, was raised in a substantial number of groups from all the different contexts, was that of family unity. It was dealt with in the lower- and middle-class coloured groups and in both the Afrikaans- and English-speaking white groups. The desirability of family unity was very strongly emphasized on the grounds that people could feel cared for and secure within the family only if the family stood firmly together as a unit.

According to these respondents it is, however, necessary to make a conscious effort to achieve this kind of family unity. One of the requirements for achieving it is that families must do things together. Doing things together serves as a binding factor and, in time, this kind of collective activity results in strong family cohesion. An activity which was repeatedly mentioned in the group discussions was that of having meals together. The opinion was expressed that families ought to have at least one meal together each day and that the atmosphere at table ought to be convivial and good-humoured. Meal times provide the opportunity for talking about all kinds of family matters and give family members the opportunity to get up to date on each other's activities. Television can have a negative influence here, especially if it has become habitual for each person to take a plate of food and sit down in front of the television set, with no further communication taking place. Another factor that can cause family meals to be dysfunctional is a tense atmosphere. One young woman, a white Afrikaans-speaking student, expressed herself fairly vigorously on the subject and suggested that, if there was tension, it was better for families not to eat together. However, she also had a great deal to say that was favourable about the sociable meals that she had enjoyed in her coloured friend's home and acknowledged that family meals can create a pleasant atmosphere in the home.

In addition to having meals together, other family activities which can contribute to the development of family cohesion and unity and which may be referred to as "family rituals" were mentioned in groups in all the contexts. Family rituals are concerned with the creation and celebration of special occasions for which members of the wider kinship group join the family. Discussion of this topic gave rise to reminiscences about Christmas. In a coloured group, reference was made to the days when they had still owned their own land and there had been room for festivities that brought the family together as a unit.

Other occasions mentioned, especially in younger groups, as examples of opportunities for the strengthening of family cohesion were holidays when the whole family went away together. In dealing with this topic, family loyalties came very prominently to the fore. In one group, reference was made to siblings whom one would perhaps not have chosen as friends, but to whom one remained loyal over the years and with whom one celebrated family rituals and family occasions.

The family also encounters obstacles in attempting to develop family unity. One of the most important of these problems, which was repeatedly brought up in the groups, was the pace of modern life, which prevented people from spending enough quality time together. It is necessary to make a conscious effort to set aside more time for each other and for doing

things together. Another factor was mentioned by a few of the middle-class coloured groups and some of the Afrikaans- and English-speaking white groups as destructive of family life: if a member of the family has an overwhelming workload, preference is given to work rather than family matters and the family is neglected. The problem of the pace of life and insufficient time was even, rather unexpectedly, mentioned by a group from a farming community, where one might have anticipated a rather more leisurely lifestyle.

2.7 FAMILY TYPES

The discussion of family unity raises the question of the structure of a family in which unity is of great importance and of what positions ought to be present within it.

2.7.1 Desired family composition

One of the problems that had to be dealt with in determining the desired family composition was that the groups had never raised the issue directly and the answer could only be inferred in two ways. The first way was to consider the kinds of relationships that were mentioned in the discussions of desirable behaviour within the family. The second was to investigate the beliefs held in the groups about the family's relationships with kin and between the three generations of children, parents and grandparents. This theme was often raised in groups and it is therefore possible to draw certain inferences on the subject.

It is clear from an analysis of the various group discussions of desirable behaviour within the context of marriage and family life that consideration was given to two kinds of relationships only. These were the parent-child relationship and the husband-wife relationship. From this we can conclude that the positions seen as essential within the family are those of husband-father, wife-mother and child(ren).

Remarks made by group members which support the conclusion that these three positions were seen as desirable include the following:

- Children must have both parents.
- It is difficult to bring up children without a father.
- Children are important in a family.
- Parents always try to give their children the best.

The three positions of husband-father, wife-mother and child(ren) are in essence the three positions found in the nuclear family. We can thus say that the **nuclear family** is accepted as the desirable family type. This view finds support in the work done by Steyn (1993) who, in a comprehensive survey, found that 93.2% of whites and 88.2% of coloureds considered the nuclear family to be the ideal family.

2.7.2 The single-parent family

In a group consisting of coloured and white professionals, there was one individual who stated that, while the nuclear family was very important, alternative family forms ought not to be ignored. One of the alternative forms mentioned in the groups was that of the **single-parent family**. There were single parents in several of the groups — especially among the coloureds — and comments were made on the desirability of single parenthood. In general, it can be stated that there was no strong support for single parenthood as a free choice, even from those who were single parents (mostly single mothers) themselves, who said that it was difficult to bring up children without a father. Single parents spoke of their problems in respect of finances, custody of their children, insecurity and their own increasing loneliness.

In a few exceptional cases women stated that they had no need of a man in their lives and were quite capable of bringing up their children alone. Stories were also told of the perseverance and success of single parents. Particular reference was made to the friendship and comradeship in the relationship between mother and daughter in single-parent families. An aged coloured grandmother recalled her own upbringing by her mother who, as a domestic worker, had successfully raised an entire family. She told of how her mother would give her food on a clean fig leaf rather than left-overs from somebody else's plate.

Although single-parent families do exist and there is a definite degree of tolerance for them, one is justified in concluding that the single-parent family does not constitute the norm for the desired family structure and, as an alternative family form, is unlikely to replace the nuclear family.

2.7.3 Cohabitation

Another alternative lifestyle mentioned in the context of marriage and family life was that of cohabitation. The phenomenon evoked considerable discussion. On the one hand, it was strongly disapproved of, but on the other, a case was made out for it and a degree of tolerance was exhibited towards it.

Some of those who were strongly opposed to cohabitation expressed the view that there had to be a marriage and that cohabitation was "out". Among those who felt this way there was a great deal of concern about the phenomenon, indicating that they still valued marriage. This point of view was, in fact, maintained in most of the groups in the various contexts.

These are some of the arguments put forward to suggest why the phenomenon of cohabitation is undesirable:

- A strongly religious argument to the effect that cohabitation is unbiblical and therefore sinful — "We Christians don't live together if we aren't married". (This was said (in Afrikaans) by a coloured man in a parents' group.)
- Cohabitation entails a high level of insecurity: the man can walk away from the relationship at any time, leaving the woman to cope with the children. This kind of situation always hurts the woman most. In any case, it is not good for the children to

grow up like this. A child ought to be brought up by his or her own father and, in this way, every family "establishes its own law". (This was said (in Afrikaans) by a lower-class coloured person.)

- It is selfish to prefer not to marry: if you really love the other person, you will choose to get married.

On the same subject, it was also claimed that cohabitation involves the same commitment as marriage and so one might just as well in fact get married.

Those who argued in favour of cohabitation were mostly of the opinion that it was only a temporary phase which eventually led to marriage. On this issue, only one lower-class coloured woman indicated that she cohabited with a man and had children by him. She claimed that, in her heart, she felt married to him, and that if she felt that way, then she was married. The arguments put forward in favour of cohabitation included:

- Cohabitation can be seen as the first stage on the way to marriage — as a trial marriage. An interesting discussion about cohabitation and trial marriage took place in a middle-class coloured women's group. During the discussion, somebody suggested that cohabitation was nothing new, but only another name for the common-law marriages that had not been unusual in previous generations. Someone in the same group added that cohabitation or trial marriage apparently worked better among white people than among coloureds. Similarly, in a white English-speaking group, a distinction was drawn between, on the one hand, engaged couples who were committed to marriage but who, for a variety of reasons, started out by merely living together and, on the other hand, the practice of casual cohabitation, which was strongly disapproved of. In connection with this last phenomenon, reference was also made to the spread of Aids.
- It is important for people to get to know each other well before marriage, since marriages are more likely to succeed when the couple know each other. Cohabitation is the best way of achieving this. In terms of this view, cohabitation is only a temporary phase, which will eventually be followed by marriage. Some group members who had themselves cohabited pointed out that as time passed, they had begun to press for the formalization of the relationship in marriage. A substantial number of arguments were put forward in opposition to this view. Specifically, it was pointed out that a marriage that followed cohabitation was not necessarily more successful than others, as expectations and circumstances could change after the marriage. This could lead to the failure of the marriage and end in divorce.
- People may cohabit, provided there are no children. If they do have children, they ought to marry.
- Cohabitation is cheaper.

- All individuals are independent and may do as they like. This last argument was advanced by a few people only.

In spite of the fact that, to judge by the group discussions, the group members were generally opposed to cohabitation, official statistics clearly indicate that there is, in fact, an increase in the incidence of this phenomenon. It was also clear during the group discussions that there was an awareness of this increase. One of the coloured grandparents' groups, for example, suggested that, in their generation, cohabitation was rare, but that today's young people are inclined to "grab and squat" (*"te vat en te sit"*).

Some of the white grandparents' groups also showed an awareness that the younger members of their families cohabited. Although they expressed disapproval, a fatalistic acceptance of the situation was evident in an attitude of "there's nothing we can do about it, so we must accept it".

To summarize, it may be stated that cohabitation has definitely not yet become the generally accepted norm and that the formalization of marriages is seen as the desirable pattern of behaviour — in other words, as a value. However, the norm is gradually becoming established of cohabitation being permissible as a preparation for marriage, and an acceptance — although perhaps still a grudging one — of this attitude is developing.

2.7.4 The extended family

A final type of family structure that was implicitly touched on during the group discussions was that of the extended or modified extended family. Neither the extended nor the modified extended family was explicitly discussed during the group sessions. However, in the majority of groups in all the different contexts, attention was paid to the subject of the relationship between the three generations — children, parents and grandparents. In the course of these discussions, the issue of whether grandparents ought to live with families often received extensive attention. This made inferences about multigenerational or extended families possible.

During the discussion of the relationship between the three generations, it was clear that there was generally strong resistance to three generations living together. The view expressed in this regard was that the husband, wife and child(ren) valued their privacy and would therefore prefer to live alone in their own house, and that grandparents ought to remain under their own roofs as long as they were capable of doing so. This view was expressed by all three generations in most of the coloured and white groups. Some of the individuals in the grandparents' groups stated very firmly that they preferred living alone and that it was not easy to live with one's children — in fact, it was exceedingly difficult. The arguments used as to why it is not a good idea for grandparents to live with their children included:

- Having grandparents living with the nuclear family often leads to friction because they cause trouble by interfering in family matters and the upbringing of the children.

- The nuclear family ought to live alone so as to be able to argue and have rows to their hearts' content and to resolve their problems for themselves. If the grandparents are living with them, they do not feel at liberty to do so, or have the privacy to be themselves.
- The children ought to have sufficient independence to be able to live their own lives and to take responsibility for their families themselves.
- When they live with their children, old people are sometimes exploited. An issue raised in this respect in some of the coloured groups was that the old people were only taken in for their pensions and that they are not well treated and sometimes even ill-treated.

At the same time, it was found in most of the groups that children were still aware of their responsibilities towards their parents. However, their view is that, if it is necessary for them to take care of their parents, it is preferable for the parents to live in a granny flat (attached to the house) so that they can retain their independence. If this is not possible, it is preferable for them to live in a home for the aged where they are among their peers and consequently happier. The idea of a granny flat attached to the children's house was also very popular with the grandparent generation.

In spite of the fact that the majority of people were opposed to grandparents directly living with their children, the necessity of retaining family ties with grandparents was emphasized, as was the view that grandparents could mean a great deal to their grandchildren. Some of the grandparents also suggested that the onus rested on them to maintain this family relationship between themselves and their children and grandchildren.

Despite this strong feeling that three generations cannot live happily together under one roof, there were individuals who believed that it was possible and were prepared to take their parents in. The views expressed in this regard included the following:

- It would be highly traumatic for parents to discover that they were not welcome in their children's homes and they (the children) would not have the heart to refuse them or to have them placed in a home for the aged.
- It depends very much on the older person's personality. If he or she is not disposed to interfere, it ought not to pose a problem. A few individuals did actually state that their parents lived with them and that this had never been a problem. On the contrary, learning to get along with older people can mean a great deal to the grandchildren.
- The family remains responsible for the older people and is obliged to make the necessary adjustments if it should be necessary to take them into the home. However, the parents should be consulted to find out whether they wish to live with their grown-up children.

Willingness to take in grandparents was evident to a greater degree among those in the coloured groups. A coloured school principal, for example, stated that coloured people had a greater sense of their responsibilities in this regard than did whites. In some of the group

discussions, some of the coloured youngsters strongly emphasized the responsibility of caring for old people. It was pointed out in the coloured groups that, although they often experienced acute housing problems, it was still common for a grandparent to live with the children in a stoep room, especially in rural areas. Grandparents living with the family are very often seen as key figures because they are available in the afternoons to care for the children when they arrive home from school.

All in all, coloured people accept old people as members of their households more readily than do whites. In one group of rural coloured women, reference was made to specific norms in terms of which their "old people are expected to hold their tongues and not interfere in their children's and grandchildren's households".

The greater willingness on the part of coloured people to take grandparents into their homes is also reflected in the fact that, as Steyn (1993:45) determined in her research on family structures, a larger percentage of multigenerational households was found among coloureds than among whites (19,8% as opposed to 1,2%).

It should additionally be noted that there is an increasing awareness that policy statements regarding the future care of the aged may over the next few decades change the picture sketched above.

In summary, it appears from our research that the multigenerational family is not the norm. It is rather seen as desirable for nuclear families to live independently so as to retain the privacy they need to determine their own affairs. However, it is necessary for the family to remain responsible for grandparents, and kinship ties ought to be maintained. Instead of referring to a modified extended family in this context, one should think in terms of a nuclear family that is firmly linked to a kinship network. The trend towards the modified extended family is more apparent among coloured people than among whites. However, even among coloured people, there is a tendency to consider the nuclear family as desirable.

2.8 SUMMARY

By way of a summary, we can say that this research project highlights the following values in respect of the family in general:

- Both for religious reasons and because of the needs in which it provides, marriage and family life is still considered the desirable pattern. There is a strong belief in the survival of marriage and family life, although uncertainties and ambivalences in this regard may be noted.
- The desirability of marriage as a permanent relationship is emphasized on, *inter alia*, religious grounds, although growing pragmatism is evident in this regard. This is apparent in the belief that, under intolerable circumstances, it is permissible to terminate a marriage.
- The desirability of exclusivity in the marital relationship is strongly emphasized and marital infidelity is viewed in a serious light and as a ground for ending the marriage.

- Strong emphasis is placed on the desirability of a strong family unit which provides permanence and security.
- The nuclear family is still seen as the desired family structure, although allowances are made for the existence of other family structures such as the single-parent family.
- Privacy for the nuclear family is strongly emphasized. It is therefore seen as undesirable for grandparents to live with the nuclear family, although there is a difference in the attitudes of coloureds and whites towards this issue. In general coloured people see it as more desirable to have grandparents living with the nuclear family than do whites.
- The maintenance of a strong kinship network and the acceptance of one's responsibilities towards grandparents is seen as highly desirable among all the groups.

CHAPTER 3

VALUES SUPPORTING QUALITY MARITAL RELATIONSHIPS

3.1 INTRODUCTION

As was indicated in the previous chapter, group members referred to two types of relationship during the group interviews, the husband-wife relationship and the parent-child relationship. Both these relationships were extensively discussed in all the groups, although some groups gave most of their attention to one or other.

It was clear from the group discussions that the husband-wife relationship was a central focus for family values. In the discussions on the subject, a wide range of themes relating to the husband-wife relationship was raised. These discussions produced judgments on what was considered desirable behaviour, characteristic of and conducive to quality marriage and thus supportive of quality family life.

The discussions did not focus only on positive behaviour and the behaviour that was desirable in a relationship. On occasion, negative aspects of behaviour that could result in family disintegration and divorce also received attention. However, most of the behaviour identified as negative was merely whatever was contrary to what had been identified as positive. An example of this is the remark made by more than one person to the effect that a lack of communication could lead to the deterioration of a marriage. The same sentiment was expressed in a different way by the majority of the participants, who believed that effective communication was implicit in any quality marital relationship. These negative statements did receive attention where relevant when the interviews were analysed, but for the purposes of this report they have been translated into positive value judgments — in other words, expressed in terms of desirable behaviour.

In addition to the group discussions, one of the open questions posed in the questionnaire was also incorporated into the analysis reported in this chapter. This question was: "What would you see as the most important values and aspects contributing to the development of healthy marriage and family life?" The answers to this question were categorized and the frequencies of the respondents' answers in each category were determined. Where relevant, this information has been incorporated into this chapter. It should be noted that the frequencies cited refer to individual respondents and not to the groups. It should also be noted that, although questionnaires had been circulated to all participants in the groups, not everyone completed them and not all the questionnaires that were filled in included answers to the two open questions. This problem was particularly apparent among the lower-class coloureds, where many of the respondents lacked literacy skills and did not see their way clear to answering this part of the questionnaire. In some of the other groups of middle-class coloureds and Afrikaans- and English-speaking whites, some of the group members returned

blank questionnaires and indicated that they were not prepared to complete them. The percentages quoted in this chapter have been calculated in terms of those who actually completed this part of the questionnaire. As a result, the totals used here do not reflect the total number of persons that participated in the group discussions.

The aspects of the husband-wife relationship in respect of which the groups identified desirable behaviour were love, respect, communication, authority relationships, factors underlying a sound working relationship, personality traits relevant to a sound working relationship, married women working outside the home and role division in the family. Each of these concepts will be analysed and discussed in the following pages.

3.2 LOVE AND RESPECT

Two of the most important factors underpinning a quality marriage that were mentioned by most of the groups in all of the various categories (although not always subjected to particularly penetrating discussion) were love and respect.

Love was identified as the foundation on which the entire marital relationship rested. It was also pointed out that love should play a role in the selection of a marriage partner and that, if it was absent from the relationship, the relationship was doomed to failure. During the group discussions, the following remarks were made about the nature of married love:

- Because it is decreed by the Bible, love has a strong religious basis.
- Love consists of emotional warmth, tenderness, showing one cares, real appreciation for each other and the desire to be in each other's company and to touch each other.
- Love must be demonstrated on both the physical and the verbal levels by declaring one's love and cherishing each other.
- A sustained loving relationship gives the persons involved a feeling of security.
- Love leads to spontaneity in a relationship, to people helping each other freely, and it thus provides a basis for building family unity.
- Loving and caring behaviour needs to be practised and worked on every day, since it is so easily forgotten in our frenetic modern life.

One old man in one of the coloured grandparents' groups went so far as to say that romance should never disappear from a marriage, no matter how old you are. In a coloured parents' group, it was suggested parents give children this advice: "Don't ever stop making love!"

However, some participants warned against an over-romanticized and unrealistic view of marriage. They pointed out that conflict might arise in a relationship at any time and that an unrealistic notion of marriage could only lead to disenchantment and an inability to handle the situation.

Respect — in the senses of both mutual respect and self-respect — was seen as an important factor in building a healthy marriage. The view expressed in this context was that respect did not arise spontaneously; one had to earn it by one's behaviour towards other people. During the group discussions, the following remarks were made about respect:

- Respect is earned by courtesy towards other people and good manners.
- Respect involves regarding others as people in their own right.
- Respect implies taking other people's feelings into consideration and treating them with courtesy.
- The differences between men and women ought to be honoured.
- Respect, and the behaviour that generates it, contributes to lasting marriages.

More negatively, it was emphasized that one's spouse ought not to belittle one in the presence of others or behave violently towards one. Respect cannot be developed in this way and these kinds of behaviour are in themselves signs of disrespect. Marriages involving this kind of behaviour are likely to disintegrate.

In addition, in answering the questionnaire a substantial number of respondents identified love and respect as among the most important values and factors in the development of a healthy family life. The frequencies and percentages of these answers are represented in Table 2.

TABLE 2: PERSONS INDICATING LOVE AND RESPECT AS IMPORTANT VALUES IN FAMILY LIFE

Group	Love		Respect		Total n in category
	f	%	f	%	
Lower-class coloureds	47	42,7	32	29,1	110
Middle-class coloureds	64	39,8	73	45,3	161
Mixed group	22	32,4	43	63,2	68
Afrikaans-speaking whites	58	41,7	35	25,2	139
English-speaking whites	74	48,4	51	33,3	153

It is interesting to note that in two groups — the middle-class coloured group and the mixed group — respect was identified more often than love as an important value. In the other three groups — lower-class coloureds, Afrikaans-speaking whites and English-speaking whites — the opposite tendency is apparent. In these groups, love was identified more often than respect as an important value.

3.3 COMMUNICATION

One of the values that was strongly emphasized by all the groups was the desirability and importance of effective and open communication between husband and wife. This emphasis on communication is also reflected in the values and factors — as tested in the questionnaire — regarded as important for the development of quality marriage and family life. This is demonstrated by Table 3.

TABLE 3: PERSONS INDICATING COMMUNICATION AS A FACTOR IN QUALITY MARITAL RELATIONSHIPS

Group	Communication as a factor	
	f	%
Lower-class coloureds	48	43,6
Middle-class coloureds	97	60,2
Mixed group	53	77,9
Afrikaans-speaking whites	90	64,7
English-speaking whites	85	55,6

It may be noted that the lowest frequency occurs among the respondents in the lower-class coloured groups, but even in this case, 46,6% of respondents identified communication as a factor in quality marital relationships.

3.3.1 The nature of communication

The groups gave considerable attention to the topic of the nature of communication in marriage. For example, it was suggested in practically every group that two-way communication was always essential and that one of the most important characteristics of this was that each party should have a turn to speak while the other *listened*. In other words, the persons involved should pay attention to each other, each having the opportunity to put their point of view while the other listened carefully to their wishes and feelings. This contradicts the norm prevailing in previous generations that "women should keep the peace by holding their tongues".

The following observations about the nature of communication were put forward in groups in all the contexts:

- Open and honest communication is very important in a marriage.
- The lines of communication between the marriage partners ought always to be open.
- A husband and wife get to know each other through communication.
- Effective communication leads to understanding of each other's points of view. This is how spouses learn to understand each other.

- Communication creates bonds between people and leads to quality marriages.
- Communication must allow room to differ and it must be possible to negotiate about the differences that arise.

In addition to such statements about the nature of effective communication, the following "don'ts" were mentioned:

- Don't tell other people how they should feel or what they should think.
- Don't finish other people's sentences for them.
- Air problems as soon as they arise and don't let them escalate.
- Don't keep your feelings bottled up until there's an explosion.
- Treat people with respect and don't try to hurt others.
- Don't start attacking other people.
- Discuss matters in an adult way and don't scream or throw things around.

Communication is not always verbal — non-verbal communication ("body language") is also important. This means that significant communication can take place during comfortable silences together, when a simple glance can convey a world of meaning. At the same time, the warning was given that one should realize that keeping quiet about a problem did not solve it and ignoring and withdrawing from one's spouse for an extended period could be very stressful and highly destructive to a marriage.

If one is no longer able to communicate, one does not know whether one can trust the other person and the result is estrangement. Communication is a skill which can be learned and it is necessary to make a point of setting aside time to practise and improve it. This is particularly true given the hectic pace of modern life. Even some of the white farmers from rural areas expressed this view.

3.3.2 Levels of communication

Another important aspect of communication between spouses which was brought up in the group discussions was that of the fields in which communication was necessary. The following specific points were made:

- Much of the communication in a family is about a "load of schlep" — everyday trivialities that families have to deal with to keep the household running. There is also a fair amount of communication intended to keep family members informed about one another's day-to-day activities. This creates a congenial atmosphere for tranquil conversation.
- There is also considerable communication devoted to resolving problems and settling differences. Major and minor problems constantly arise in a marriage and a household. Various irritations crop up, members have differing views and interpret things in different ways. This leads to conflict. It is essential to discuss these problems and

resolve them. It was pointed out that married couples should have the privacy necessary to bring their problems and conflicts out into the open in order to deal with them. In resolving issues, it is essential for spouses to meet each other half way, for each to make concessions and for them to compromise. However, it is not essential always to reach consensus — in fact, it is important that differences should be accepted and respected. When one realizes that one has been in the wrong, one must be able to apologize and after that mistakes ought to be forgiven.

- Several participants vigorously expressed the view that spouses ought not to go to sleep angry at one another. However, one person made the somewhat cryptic comment that this was not always quite so easy.
- Husbands and wives ought to talk about who they are, what they are working towards and their vision for the future. On the basis of the knowledge thus acquired, they can make plans together.
- One should keep one's spouse informed about one's movements. One should explain where one is going and provide an indication of one's time schedule.
- The household budget ought to be discussed and financial planning ought to be carried out. This subject can generate a great deal of conflict and needs to be handled with extreme care.
- An important remark made in the group discussions about communication was that spouses and families should beware of the tendency to concentrate on negative topics. It is essential that they should also be able to laugh and chat, have fun together and enjoy one another's company. On this issue, a coloured man in a parents' group remarked (in Afrikaans) that communication also meant "joking and playing the fool together, because that made for a great atmosphere". This kind of conversation around the dining table can be very relaxing and unifying. At the same time, husband and wife also need time to be alone together and enjoy each other's company. A time and a place should be set aside for this too.
- A final but important aspect of communication raised in the group discussions is that husband and wife should make joint decisions on a wide variety of aspects of family life. Decision-making is closely connected to the question of patterns of authority in the family and the way in which related communication takes place. The authority patterns in the family constitute an important aspect of the marital relationship between husband and wife and this issue was widely discussed in the groups.

3.4 PATTERNS OF AUTHORITY IN THE HUSBAND-WIFE RELATIONSHIP

An aspect of the husband-wife relationship regarded as relevant by virtually all the groups was that of patterns of authority in the family in general and specifically between husband

and wife. Some groups discussed the subject in depth, while others gave it only cursory attention. Generally speaking, however, this facet of marriage attracted wide attention.

In the group discussions it became abundantly clear that comprehensive changes had been taking place in the authority relationship between husband and wife. These changes were mostly brought up in the grandparents' groups (both white and coloured). These people indicated that the patterns of household authority with which they had grown up had been radically different from those in their children and grandchildren's homes.

The grandparental generation grew up largely in households where the husband was the dominant figure and the wife and children were subject to his instructions — his word was law. One of the grandparents in an English-speaking grandparents' group said she was brought up in Victorian style in a home dominated by her father. However, there were also a few grandparents who indicated that their mothers had been strong individuals who had taken their place alongside their husbands.

This pattern of male dominance changed over the past few decades as women were beginning to acquire an increasing say in marriage. Unanimity as to the exact nature and extent of the authority women possess in family life and in their relationships with their husbands could not be reached, although various options were suggested. These varied from an unchanged male-dominant view at one extreme to a situation in which equality prevailed at the other. Between the extremes there were various shades of opinion.

3.4.1 The husband-dominant pattern

In the first instance, members of some of the groups, especially the lower-class coloured groups, expressed the opinion that the husband was the dominant person ("master" or "boss") in the household and that the wife had to learn to be submissive, hold her tongue and not answer back if she and her husband should have an argument, for fear of being physically abused. One woman explicitly stated that, even if he were the "master" of the household, her husband ought not to hit her. It thus appears that, in lower-class coloured families, male domination depends largely on superior physical strength and even on violence. Some of the men in the lower-class coloured groups claimed that women ought to be beaten if they transgressed, and that some women "asked for it".

It should be noted that these statements were made by individuals in certain of the groups. Not one of the groups in which such statements were made agreed generally with such sentiments and open disagreement was often expressed. Some lower-class coloured groups, including rural ones, were unanimous that, although they were aware of family violence, this kind of domineering violence did not occur in their own families and that the wives did have a say in family matters. One man in a lower-class coloured group said (in Afrikaans) that "Women also play an important role in the home and must be honoured for it. The fact that the husband is the boss certainly does not mean that he can beat her up."

This pattern of male dominance was also found in white groups, although to a lesser extent. For example, one woman in a group of young Afrikaans-speaking people remarked,

"My father is the boss, and that makes me feel as if my mother is nothing. That is wrong, because my mother can take decisions just as well."

The dominance or authority of the husband is formulated with somewhat greater moderation among more educated groups. This is why the discussions in these groups dealt with the husband as the head of the family rather than the husband as master or boss.

3.4.2 The husband as head of the household

A second form of authority pattern encountered was one in which the husband was head of the household, but the wife also played a part in decision-making. In the group discussions, one of the reasons advanced for wives increasingly being included in decision-making was that they followed careers outside the home and made a contribution to supporting the family. This opinion was expressed in various ways.

A number of persons in some of the groups from all the contexts believed fairly strongly that the husband was the head of the household. He occupies a special position and must therefore be respected and consulted. One woman in an English-speaking group, for example, suggested that there had to be a definite structure in the home, namely that the husband was head of the household, and that his wife had to support him in that position to avoid confusion, especially among the children.

The view of the husband as head of the household was apparent in the following remarks:

- It is ordained in the Scriptures; the husband is the family priest.
- It is the husband who plans for the future of his family.
- The husband is his family's protector and provider.
- As provider, the husband is obliged to work. If he does not work, he will develop guilt feelings which can damage the marriage. If his wife works and earns a higher salary, he may feel inferior, which can damage the relationship.

This headship ought not to be equated with dominance, as it does not imply that a wife is inferior to her husband or that she becomes a non-person after her marriage. Nor does it mean that the husband may order his wife around and run her life as he wishes. The wife has her own domain of decision-making in the household, but the husband is head of the household. In this authority pattern there is absolutely no question of a "master-slave" or "master-servant" relationship, which can only have negative consequences.

Instead, this pattern entails leadership, where the husband must make room for the members of his family so that all can develop to their full potential. The wife ought also to be consulted in all decision-making and problems must be discussed with her. However, the husband should take the final decisions. Although this authority pattern, by permitting consultation, allows the wife a greater opportunity to take her rightful place in the family than was the case in Victorian families, the final pattern is ultimately still one of male dominance.

It is interesting to note that when groups were asked to give content to the notion of "my husband as head of the household", they were not always able to provide spontaneous and articulate answers. There were somewhat vague references to its being a way of ensuring order, him being the head because he was the breadwinner or the wife respecting him as head of the household but not being there to be bossed about. In lower-class coloured groups, the concept was articulated (in Afrikaans) in such ways as these: "As the head of the household, he has to get up if anyone knocks on the door at night"; "As the head of the household, he must get up on the roof if it starts leaking"; "If a child misbehaves, the first question that is asked is, where is the child's father?"

All the groups in the various contexts included individuals who granted wives a greater degree of authority than was the case in the pattern discussed above. These people still adhered to the notion of the headship of the husband, but they did not have as clear a conception of exactly what this headship entailed. As one woman put it, headship consisted more in an attitude of giving recognition to the husband than as something that came about on the ground.

The remarks made on this issue included:

- A wife stands next to her husband, but not in his shoes.
- Contemporary life provides enough room for women and their qualities to make their own important contribution to family life.
- The husband is actually head of the household, but he cannot run his wife's life.
- A husband may not force his own opinions on his better half.
- A wife has her own interests to pursue and she does not want to account constantly for what she does or where she is.

3.4.3 The egalitarian pattern

More positive remarks made in conjunction with the previous pattern that transformed it into the egalitarian pattern were that husband and wife were partners and that all decisions ought to be taken jointly. This indicates that there is no question of the husband being head; instead, the equality of husband and wife is emphasized. In fact, a strongly worded objection to the notion of the husband as head of the household was made in one of the white English-speaking grandparents' groups. The woman in question declared that she detested this kind of remark and claimed that it really came from Afrikaans-speaking people.

Remarks supporting the egalitarian pattern included the following:

- Marriage is a fifty-fifty proposition.
- A husband and wife stand united and they are friends.
- The marriage relationship means shared leadership.

These opinions were not confined to women. For example, some of the men in a white parents' group indicated that they believed that it was a good thing for a wife to be regarded as her husband's equal in the family today. One man in a white parents' group specifically stated that society had changed and that he wanted a strong woman at his side.

Financial matters also came under discussion in the context of greater equality between husband and wife. The opinions expressed in this regard indicated that if the husband and wife had reached a good understanding, it ought not to be a problem if the wife brought home the larger salary cheque. In any case, today it is no longer necessarily the case that the person who handles the family finances is the boss. It is a question of simple pragmatics that the one who can best handle money should be responsible for the family finances.

The wife comes undoubtedly more strongly to the fore in the egalitarian pattern. A woman in one of the middle-class coloured groups, for example, suggested that wives ought to stand firm and that if they carried on peacefully with their affairs they would convince their husbands of their point of view. The egalitarian pattern of partnership found expression in various guises. These are some of the statements made in this context:

- If a husband has to work too hard, his wife has to take over at home and keep things in order. Because she plays the part of organizer in the home, she may seem to be dominant, but actually the husband and wife form a team.
- The wife is boss during the week, but over weekends the husband takes over. This claim was made in a white Afrikaans-speaking group in which the men all followed "yuppie" careers and the women were all homemakers.

Although this view was not supported by all the participants in all the groups, very little opposition was expressed to it. Only one person suggested that it would be difficult for a husband to adapt to such a relationship of equality.

3.4.4 The wife-dominant pattern

The last authority pattern which was noticeable in the group discussions, particularly in the lower-class coloured discussion groups, was that of wife-dominance. The remarks made in this respect (in Afrikaans) included: "Sometimes the mother dominates in the home", and "The wife is the strongest person in the household and the children — sons as well as daughters — turn to her to discuss their problems." Earlier research by Steyn (1961) had demonstrated the presence of wife-dominance in the family life of lower-class coloureds, but, since it was mentioned by only a few persons in two groups in the present project, it

can hardly be considered an accepted pattern among lower-class coloureds.

It is interesting that, although a fair amount of attention was given to the authority relationship between husband and wife in the group discussions, little was reflected in the answers to the questionnaires. Of all these different patterns, the only one referred to in the questionnaires as a factor contributing to the development of a quality marriage and family life is that of equality between husband and wife. Even this single type of relationship was mentioned by a small number of respondents only. Only one person from the lower-class coloured groups referred to it, eight from the middle-class coloured groups, ten from the mixed groups, two from the white Afrikaans-speaking groups and four from the white English-speaking groups.

Considering this low response frequency, there is reason to doubt that an arrangement providing for equal authority for husband and wife can, at this stage, be identified as a desirable pattern of behaviour. In the group discussions, the weight of opinion lay with the notion of the husband as head of the household, with the wife occupying the position of junior or equal partner in the process of decision-making in respect of family matters. One could thus conclude that there is a shift away from husband-dominance to a more or less egalitarian pattern as the desirable pattern within the family.

3.5 CHARACTERISTICS OF A QUALITY UNDERSTANDING IN MARRIAGE

Apart from the factors that have been discussed so far, in most of the groups it was also mentioned that there had to be a sound understanding between husband and wife if a good marriage was to be maintained. Several aspects of behaviour were mentioned as characteristic of this kind of understanding. In this context, some of the following factors were mentioned and discussed in greater depth.

- Understanding and knowing each other.
- Making provision for the personal space and growth of each individual. (However, this factor was not mentioned by people in the lower-class coloured groups.)
- Creating opportunities to spend quality time together. (This factor was not mentioned in the lower-class coloured groups either.)
- Providing each other with help and support.

Many other types of behaviour that can contribute to a sound understanding were merely mentioned. These can be grouped together under the broad theme of sharing ("togetherness") and reciprocity. When the question on the most important factors and values contributing to the development of quality marriages and family life was analysed, it was found that a great many respondents listed some of the aspects of behaviour seen as able to contribute to a sound understanding. It was also clear that the frequency distribution of the types of behaviour which emerged from the analysis of the question in the questionnaire

coincided markedly with the impression gained from the analysis of the group interviews. The distribution table (Table 4) is thus reproduced here in order to give an impression of how often these types of behaviour were mentioned. Table 4 reflects the percentage of respondents in the five main categories who mentioned a specific type of behaviour. In the case of the various detailed types of behaviour that have been grouped together under the broad heading of sharing and reciprocity, the raw scores have been listed. The frequencies of these separate types have been totalled and the resulting figure has been reflected as sharing and reciprocity. For this category, a frequency percentage has been provided.

When this table is considered, it is noticeable that only 13,6% of the respondents in the lower-class coloured groups mentioned specific aspects of behaviour under sharing and reciprocity, compared with 50,3% in the English-speaking white groups. The number of respondents in the Afrikaans-speaking white groups was the second lowest, at 35,3%, but this figure is considerably higher than that for the respondents in the lower-class coloured groups. It is also noticeable that none of the respondents in the lower-class coloured groups mentioned giving personal space or creating opportunities to spend quality time together. Among the other categories examined, the highest frequency of responses here was in the Afrikaans-speaking white groups (29,5% and 16,3% respectively).

A scrutiny of this table raises an important question: whether the difference in the distribution of the responses by the different categories of groups indicates a difference in values or rather a difference in lifestyle and level of development. It would seem that the last mentioned is the correct interpretation, since there were respondents in some of the groups in all the contexts who did, in fact, mention the desirability of a sound understanding either in general or in terms of specific desirable patterns of behaviour as being important for quality marriages and family life.

It would thus seem that a sound understanding between husband and wife can be seen as desirable for the creation of a healthy marriage and family life — in other words, as a value. This sound understanding is characterized by understanding and knowing each other, giving each other personal space for personal growth, providing each other with help, support and assistance and having a general pattern of sharing and reciprocity.

TABLE 4: TYPES OF BEHAVIOUR CONTRIBUTING TO QUALITY MARITAL RELATIONSHIPS

Types of behaviour	*L-C. C.	M-C. C.	Mixed	AFR.-SP. W.	ENG.-SP. W.
Good understanding	16,4	20,5	7,3	8,6	2,6
Knowing and understanding one another	10,9	20,5	8,8	5,8	11,8
Giving personal space	–	6,2	2,9	13,7	5,9
Having quality time together	–	16,8	14,7	29,5	16,3
Help and support	10,0	2,5	4,4	7,2	8,5
Reciprocity and sharing	13,6	41,6	42,6	35,3	50,3
Co-operation	1	9	5	3	12
Agreement	2	7	3	1	2
Give and take	–	–	6	3	11
Shared responsibilities	–	–	2	4	10
Mutual consideration	1	5	–	3	7
Sexual adjustment	–	4	1	–	2
Conflict resolution	3	3	6	4	9
Mutual tolerance	–	12	1	2	2
Mutual acceptance	–	5	4	12	2
Compatibility	–	–	–	–	3
Peace in the home	6	1	–	1	2
Shared interests	–	2	1	2	10
Mutual appreciation	2	4	–	1	–
Being friends	–	10	–	7	5
Mutual regard	–	2	1	2	10
Complementing one another	–	2	–	–	–

* L-C. C.: Lower-class coloureds; M-C. C.: Middle-class coloureds; AFR.-SP. W.: Afrikaans-speaking whites; ENG.-SP. W.: English-speaking whites.

3.6 PERSONALITY TRAITS CONDUCIVE TO QUALITY MARITAL RELATIONSHIPS

Apart from the desired types of behaviour that underpin a sound understanding between husband and wife — and thus a healthy marriage — another aspect that is important for the development of a healthy marriage was brought up during the group discussions. This is the necessity for those in the marital relationship to possess certain personality traits that promote the growth of a sound understanding. Admittedly, this theme was not dealt with in

great depth during the group discussions — in fact, very few groups touched on it. We see, for example, that it was not brought up in a single lower-class coloured or mixed group and raised in only a few of the middle-class Afrikaans-speaking coloured and white groups. The groups in which it was most commonly mentioned were the English-speaking white groups, where a range of traits was mentioned, including generosity, honesty, willingness to change, a sense of humour, patience, tolerance and maturity.

Despite the fact that the broad theme of desirable personality traits was touched on only in passing by some of the groups, and actually elicited little further comment, it was decided to include it in the analysis in this chapter. The rationale for this decision was that several respondents did indicate desirable personality factors when filling in the questionnaires — far more frequently than was the case during the group discussions. The responses in the questionnaires may therefore be accepted as supplementing the interviews and giving an indication of a possible dimension of desirable aspects of behaviour that should be taken into account in building a healthy marital relationship.

Altogether 28 personality traits were listed by the various respondents. Since many of these traits were mentioned by only one or two of the respondents, it was decided to combine them into broader categories: thorough consideration of the traits produced the categories of maturity, morality and altruism. Table 5 indicates the total percentages of respondents who provided answers in each category and provides details of the raw figures in respect of respondents who indicated a specific trait.

The table shows that the respondents in the lower-class coloured groups selected the fewest of these personality traits. The broad category which reflected the highest frequency was morality. Only 4,5% of respondents in the lower-class coloured group mentioned specific personality traits in this category, compared with 31,4% of the respondents in the English-speaking white groups. The characteristics mentioned most frequently were honesty and loyalty. In the category of maturity, the highest frequency occurred among the English-speaking white groups, where 11,8% of the respondents mentioned specific characteristics. In the broad category of altruism, the highest frequency recorded was among the Afrikaans-speaking white groups, with 10,8% of the respondents mentioning specific traits. Once more, this raises the question of whether the differing responses, and particularly the low frequency of responses among the lower-class coloured groups, should be attributed to a difference in values or simply to a lower level of development. It should also be remembered that this information was collected in a totally unstructured way. If the respondents had been faced with a structured questionnaire on which predetermined characteristics had to be marked off as desirable or undesirable, the number of respondents indicating these traits as desirable might have been considerably higher.

Nevertheless, it could probably be stated that maturity, high moral principles and altruism are the desired characteristics in spouses that are needed to develop and maintain a successful marriage.

TABLE 5: PERSONALITY FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO QUALITY MARITAL RELATIONSHIPS

Category	L-C. C.	M-C. C.	AFR.-SP W.	ENG.-SP. W.
Maturity	0,9%	5,0%	6,5%	11,8%
Maturity	–	–	1	4
Healthy self-image	–	–	1	–
Dedication	–	2	2	–
Endurance	–	–	–	2
Perseverance	–	1	–	1
Responsibility	1	2	–	–
Positive attitude	–	2	–	–
Friendliness	–	–	1	–
Humour	–	1	2	8
Cheerfulness	–	–	1	–
Willingness to change	–	–	1	3
Morality	4,5%	16,1%	11,5%	31,4%
Honesty	3	16	12	38
Loyalty	2	2	3	9
Integrity	–	–	1	–
Reliability	–	–	–	1
Sincerity	–	7	–	–
Fairness	–	1	–	–
Altruism	0,9%	4,3%	10,8%	4,6%
Self-sacrifice	–	–	5	–
Consideration	–	–	2	–
Tolerance	–	–	2	–
Patience	–	1	1	2
Helpfulness	–	1	1	–
Forgivingness	–	–	1	–
Unselfishness	1	3	1	4
Understanding of faults	–	–	1	–
Sensitivity	–	–	1	1
Conciliatoriness	–	1	–	–
Concern	–	1	–	–

3.7 FACTORS PREJUDICIAL TO QUALITY MARRIAGE AND FAMILY LIFE

The group interviews concentrated essentially on the positive values that underpin quality marriages and family life. However, problems that arise from time to time and pose a threat to quality marital and family life were also mentioned and discussed in the groups. In addition, a question in the questionnaire asked the respondents to indicate what they believed to be the most important factors leading to the development of serious marital and family problems. It was therefore possible to determine what the respondents viewed as the major factors leading to marital and family problems, and whether there were differences on this issue between the various cultural groups.

It must be pointed out that in classifying the answers on the questionnaire only broad general categories were used, as Table 6 makes clear.

As the table indicates, there were differing views among the various population categories on the major aspects leading to family problems. For example, 62,7% of respondents in the lower-class coloured groups and 40,4% of respondents in the middle-class coloured groups considered alcohol a serious problem, compared with only 12,2% and 20,9% of respondents in the Afrikaans- and English-speaking white groups respectively. On the other hand, lack of communication was considered a significant problem in the middle-class coloured groups (41,6%), the Afrikaans-speaking white groups (55,3%), and the English-speaking white groups (38,6%), as compared with only 14,4% in the lower-class coloured groups. The same pattern is evident for a poor relationship, which even greater percentages of respondents in the three groups mentioned first identified as a serious problem — 69,6% in the middle-class coloured groups, 82,7% in the Afrikaans-speaking white groups and 58,8% in the English-speaking white groups, compared with only 20,9% of the respondents in the lower-class coloured groups. Interestingly enough, economic factors were specified as a factor that could lead to family problems by larger percentages of respondents in the middle-class coloured groups (26,1%), the Afrikaans-speaking white groups (22,3%) and the English-speaking white groups (34,6%) than by respondents in the lower-class coloured groups (8,2%), among whom there was probably a more severe lack of financial resources than in the other groups.

All the factors indicated as problematic in the questionnaires were brought up during the group interviews. It is interesting to note that many of the factors identified as leading to family problems involve the lack or absence of those aspects supporting quality marriages and family life. One example is that honest, open communication was identified as an important factor necessary for quality family life, while a lack of communication was mentioned as a factor that could lead to family problems.

TABLE 6: FACTORS THAT CAN LEAD TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF SERIOUS MARITAL AND FAMILY PROBLEMS

Problem	L-C. C.		M-C. C.		Mixed		AFR.-SP. W.		ENG.-SP. W.	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
Alcohol	69	62,7	65	40,4	16	23,5	17	12,2	32	20,9
Drugs	19	17,3	23	14,3	11	16,2	–	–	13	8,5
Rows	16	14,5	11	6,8	3	4,4	13	9,4	10	6,5
Violence	9	8,2	9	5,6	1	1,5	6	4,3	15	7,8
Economic factors*	9	8,2	42	26,1	26	38,2	31	22,3	53	34,6
Lack of communication	16	14,5	67	41,6	31	45,6	77	55,3	59	38,6
Lack of love	11	10,0	20	12,4	4	5,9	20	14,4	20	13,1
Lack of respect	8	7,3	24	14,9	15	22,1	9	6,5	18	11,8
Poor relationship	23	20,9	112	69,6	52	76,5	115	82,7	90	58,8
Personality	23	20,9	47	29,2	36	52,9	43	30,9	90	58,8
Child before marriage	14	12,7	14	8,7	–	–	–	–	–	–
Combination of circumstances	–	–	4	2,5	8	11,8	–	–	7	4,6
Religion	4	3,6	9	5,6	3	4,4	31	22,3	13	8,5
TOTAL**	110		161		68		139		153	

* Economic factors include unemployment, work overload, poor finances, giving preference to work, etc.

** The totals do not equal the sums of the columns, since more than one factor was often mentioned. The totals simply indicate the number of persons in each population category.

3.8 THE IMPLICATIONS FOR QUALITY MARRIAGES OF MARRIED WOMEN'S WORK OUTSIDE THE HOME

A phenomenon that has resulted in considerable changes in the relationship between husband and wife is the fact that, over the past three or four decades, an increasing number of married women have entered the labour market. Those who took part in the grandparents' group discussions probably mostly grew up in the more traditional family. The role patterns in this type of family presented the husband as breadwinner and the wife as homemaker or childminder. This strongly differentiated or segregated role division was

widely accepted and it can reasonably be claimed that it was considered the desirable pattern in society. However, during the last half of this century, drastic changes in the traditional role division in the family have taken place.

The fact that married women have entered the labour market means they have less time to devote to their husbands, children, friends and relations. The household has also had to be reorganized to a great extent to enable wives to enter the labour market. It is therefore understandable that the theme of the working wife arose in all the groups in all the contexts.

Inter alia, the issue of married women's motives for working outside the home was raised. Opinions as to the desirability or otherwise of this phenomenon were expressed and the changing household roles of husband and wife were also brought up.

3.8.1 Reasons for married women entering or re-entering the labour market

Opinions were contributed in some of the groups in all the different contexts on the motives of married women entering or re-entering the labour market. The major reasons advanced were the following:

- It is necessary for wives to go to work to provide additional income. A second cheque is essential in present-day economic conditions and the high cost of living means that husband and wife must jointly support the family. This reason was advanced by all the groups in the different contexts. In an English-speaking coloured parents' group, the men were asked directly what their attitude was to work outside the home by those of their wives who had minor children. One respondent made a comment typical of what was said in many groups: "A mother ought preferably to stay at home for the first five to seven years of her child's life, but economic necessity makes it impossible and one has to look for alternative child care to ensure the essential second cheque." The discussions of the motives for married women working outside the home often came down to the *fait accompli* of economic necessity. Reference was also made to single mothers, who had no alternative but to work outside the home.

- The married woman works because her financial contribution makes it possible for the family to maintain a higher standard of living. This reason was not put forward in the lower-class coloured groups. Such remarks led to interesting discussions on standards of living. A white woman in a grandparents' group said, "But things we considered luxuries, today are practically viewed as necessities in bringing up children."

- It is simply accepted that the wife has to work. The type of remarks made in this regard were that it was old-fashioned for wives not to work and that it was typical of the times for both husbands and wives to work. This unthinking acceptance was expressed by persons in the lower-class coloured groups. In two of these groups, some of the young people expressed the opinion that if the wife did not work, she simply sat at home drinking, or sat at home doing nothing at all.

- Wives go to work because they want to. As an example of this, one woman said that she had chosen to go back to work because she had begun to feel a prisoner in her own home. Spending the entire day at home may lead to frustration, which is not good for a marriage. Another statement made in this context was that the world had opened up for women and that they could not be blamed for wanting to take advantage of this and seeking career fulfilment. A coloured professional mother stated, "I do believe a mother should be there for her children, but my career is also one of my priorities." According to a young Afrikaans-speaking white woman, young girls today expect to follow a career and to continue it after marriage: it may be interrupted for the birth and early care of children, but they intend returning to their careers thereafter. Another opinion voiced by a young Afrikaans-speaking white woman was that it was becoming increasingly common for her contemporaries to choose to follow a career — and to prepare themselves for it — that they could pursue from home. This belief about career-orientated women was voiced in groups in all the different categories except for the lower-class coloured groups.

3.8.2 Opinions and attitudes towards women's involvement in work outside the home

Widely varying opinions were expressed on the desirability or otherwise of married women entering the labour market. One of the issues considered was whether a wife could simply go off to work. Various views were expressed on this issue. One was that husbands had to work, but wives had a choice. In some groups the opinion was expressed that it was the wife's own choice: if she wanted to work, she could, but if she preferred to stay at home, that was also acceptable.

In another group, it was suggested that the question of whether the wife should take a job should be thoroughly discussed by the husband and wife so as to avoid conflict. One man remarked in this regard that if he and his wife had made a joint decision that she should work and she found it too demanding, she could stop working.

From the above, it seems that a married woman's entry into the labour market is still largely a voluntary decision — more so than in the case of husbands, for whom participation in the labour market is seen as a responsibility they have to assume in order to provide for their families. It therefore seems that the role of the wife/mother working outside the home has not yet become fully institutionalized.

Apart from the fact that the entry of married women into the labour market is considered voluntary, whether after consultation with their husbands or not, there are various attitudes as to the desirability of married women working. The following patterns can be identified:

- Some group members took the fairly emphatic view that a woman's place was in the home. Examples of this were two young men, one in a lower-class coloured group and the other in an English-speaking white group, who both stated that a husband had to work very hard for his salary in order to ensure that there was enough money for his

wife to stay at home and care for the children. In a middle-class coloured group, a man stated that husbands had no say over their wives' money and that this led to family disintegration. In one of the Afrikaans-speaking white grandparents' groups, a grandmother said that she saw it as a problem if a married woman took a job, and questioned whether this was really necessary because wives worked only to obtain luxuries. She added that the young people of today wanted to fly too high, to begin where their parents had left off and to avoid hardship.

- In one of the English-speaking white parents' groups, a woman suggested that marrying and having children was a career in itself and that you could not hold down a job as well. Another opinion from this group dealt with the question of whether it was right for a wife to work if her husband earned enough money. The belief that a woman's place is in the home was expressed in groups in various contexts, but there was no case where an entire group supported the idea and it usually aroused opposition.
- A more frequent and widespread attitude, which represents a more moderate point of view, was that it was preferable for a wife not to work, but that circumstances often obliged her to do so.
- A third point of view in direct opposition to the above two is unconditionally accepting of married women working outside the home. This view was held by both men and women. *Inter alia*, the opinion was stated that it could no longer be seen as an evil for a wife to work, that it was beneficial to a woman's self-image and development for her to work and that she needed space to do what she really wanted to do. Some of the men in a group stated that they certainly did not mind if their wives worked because this was one of the ways in which their wives helped them. One man said that his wife was as well-trained as he was and that he certainly could not stand in her way.

Taken as a whole, it seems that the attitudes of both men and women to the desirability of married women working outside the home are still very fluid, ranging from total rejection to complete acceptance. It is obvious that this is an area which is subject to considerable change, that the traditional view of a woman's place being in the home has been largely abandoned and that, whether unreservedly or under specific conditions, there is growing acceptance of economic activity by married women outside the home.

3.8.3 Implications for the allocation of household tasks

In the traditional family, roles were strongly differentiated in that the husband was expected to provide his family with the necessities of life and the wife was responsible for caring for the home and the children. It is, however, to be expected that the entry of married women into the labour market will influence role differentiation within the family. The group interviews in all the different contexts made it clear that this was indeed the case.

The most significant consequence of married women's entry into the labour market for role differentiation in the family is that the husband can be expected to begin participating in household duties and child care. Thus, male and female gender roles are becoming less segregated.

In the group discussions in all the different contexts, it emerged clearly that a great deal of change was taking place in this sphere. However, there were also some signs of opposition to the change. For example, one man from a rural area stated that he provided his wife with servants and that she could hardly expect him to help about the house as well. In general, group discussions involving people in the agricultural sector made it clear that the very nature of the industry made it more difficult for movement away from the traditional role differentiation to take place.

This resistance to change is also present in urban areas, although to a far lesser extent. One young man in an English-speaking white group, for example, claimed that if he did not wish his wife to work, he could not be expected to help her with the household chores — should she insist on taking a job.

Similarly, a woman in a lower-class coloured group stated that husbands should help around the house if their wives worked, but that the men thought they were doing the wives a favour if they did so. Another woman indicated that there was definite resistance from husbands when they were asked to help. However, such comments were very rare and there was not a single case in which an entire group found itself in general agreement with this kind of remark. Invariably, both men and women told anecdotes that indicated that strictly segregated gender roles were becoming blurred and were no longer as common as they had been.

From the group discussions, it seems that, broadly speaking, two patterns have developed for the involvement of husbands in household chores and childcare:

- If a woman works, her husband must do his share and be willing to help around the house. In this pattern, emphasis falls on the issue of help, and housekeeping still remains the wife's responsibility. However, her husband is under an obligation to help her, and when he does so, he is not doing her a favour. This willingness to help is also widely accepted by men. In a few cases, men stated their preference for the traditional role division, but admitted that if their wives worked, they were obliged to help them around the house. In other cases, husbands indicated that they did help around the house, even if their wives did not work, although it was also claimed that if a woman did not work, she could not demand that her husband help with chores.

  Varying views were expressed on the nature of the help that might be expected. One man stated that cooking was a woman's work, that his wife could not expect him to help her with that, and that he preferred to help with the children. However, in many cases, it was claimed that these days men were more at home in the kitchen and that they prepared meals themselves or helped their wives to do so and to wash the dishes afterwards. In other cases, it was suggested that husbands should help with household

chores as well as with childcare. In some of the groups, it was indicated that the younger generation had been brought up with the idea that husbands ought to help around the house and that younger couples were more inclined to help each other. Apart from identifying the nature of the help to be given, this pattern also strongly indicates the desirability of husbands helping their working wives, which is also put into practice.

- The second pattern that emerged was that men ought not only to help their wives, but should accept their role around the home and that there ought to be a fifty-fifty division of chores. Working wives are people in their own right and so there ought to be a greater degree of equality: the idea of the traditional role division ought to be abandoned. There were no hard and fast views about the exact form that role division in the home ought to take. Instead, it seems, each one ought to do whatever needs doing, the question of who should do what tasks should be negotiated and tasks ought to be interchangeable. These views were put forward in all the different contexts, except in the lower-class coloured groups. It appears, then, that the values manifested here are those of greater parity in terms of equality, the possibility of exchanges and the possibility of negotiation. In such cases, it can be expected that no standard normative pattern of behaviour will emerge. Instead, the norm will be that each family evolves its own individual pattern and, in this way, a quality relationship will develop between the husband and wife in the family.

The question of the extent to which a changing role performance for husbands and wives is becoming normative or institutionalized is sometimes posed.

In this regard, it was mentioned that young boys were expected to be more involved in housekeeping and a greater willingness to accept this was found in the groups of young people. An Afrikaans-speaking white man in a parents' group told of his own socialization in segregated roles, but stated that he was comfortable about doing chores in his own home and that his daughter often helped him to prepare food. He expected that, as a result, his daughter would expect her future husband to share similarly in the household chores — a movement in the direction of socialization for "new" roles.

A boy in a group of young Afrikaans-speaking whites remarked (in Afrikaans) that "Just washing dishes doesn't make you a girl." For this group, sharing household chores was a natural development in a more supple and less regimented role division.

It does therefore seem that shared and interchangeable role divisions for men and women are becoming institutionalized.

3.9 SUMMARY

In summarizing this chapter, it can be stated that there are undoubtedly still values that underpin a quality husband-wife relationship. As the group discussions showed, some of these values are very fluid in that they have already changed or are in the process of

changing. This means that there is not always consensus as to whether certain values still exist and that the extent to which values have become institutionalized remains an open question. Even so, there is no reason to claim that there is a large-scale conflict of values, and clear indications of the direction in which the values are changing are evident.

Some of the most important values which have been identified here are:

- Mutual love and respect.
- Honest and open two-way communication, in which lines of communication are kept open, listening constitutes an important part of communication and communication takes place on a wide front — from simply laughing and chatting to problem-solving.
- A shift away from the husband-dominant authority pattern to a situation where the man is still seen as head of the household but with his wife as junior or equal partner in the process of decision-making, which indicates movement towards a more egalitarian pattern and its possible institutionalization.
- The desirability of a sound understanding between spouses, which is characterized by understanding and knowing each other, allowing each other room for personal growth, helping, supporting and assisting each other and generally following a pattern of togetherness and reciprocity.
- Maturity, morality and altruism as desirable personality traits in spouses.
- A shift away from the view that married women ought not to work outside the home and towards an acceptance of their entry into the labour market partly for pragmatic reasons (for example, in times of financial difficulty) and partly for ideological reasons (that it is her own choice, that she has the right to career fulfilment and that, because of her training, she cannot be denied the right to follow a career).
- A shift away from the traditional conception of family roles to a view that it is a husband's task to help with household chores and childcare, and even towards a more egalitarian view that emphasizes the desirability of equality, interchangeability and negotiability within the family sphere.

There are thus clearly visible changes in the husband-wife relationship and in the values underpinning it. Old values are gradually being phased out and replaced by new ones, although some of these are still highly fluid and have not always assumed a clearly defined form. There is therefore no good reason to claim, as does Popenoe (1993a:527), that there is a total collapse of values in the context of the husband-wife relationship.

In conclusion, it should be pointed out that the group interviews did not always deal exclusively with values. Family problems were also discussed regularly and these problems were also identified in the questionnaire. Views on the major factors leading to marital and family problems did indeed differ as between the different cultural groups. It is important to note that some of the factors identified as contributing to the development of family

problems constituted the absence of those factors supporting quality marriage and family life. For example, honest and free communication was seen as an important factor in achieving quality marital and family life, while a lack thereof was mentioned as giving rise to family problems.

CHAPTER 4

VALUES SUPPORTING QUALITY PARENT-CHILD RELATIONSHIPS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

It has already been indicated that the relationships between husband and wife and between parent and child are two of the most significant relationships around which the family relationship system pivots. Like the husband-wife relationship, the parent-child relationship evoked a great deal of discussion in the groups in the different contexts and, again like the husband-wife relationship, it did not receive the same degree of attention in all the groups. In some groups it was considered in much greater detail than in others. Although some of the groups paid roughly the same amount of attention to the two relationship systems, groups which gave in-depth attention to the husband-wife relationship often gave only cursory attention to the parent-child relationship and *vice versa*. In any case, the group discussions proved adequate for identifying the specific values that underpin the parent-child relationship and changes in these values.

One important point that emerged explicitly in groups spanning all three generations (groups of young people, parents and grandparents) was that children were still regarded as highly important in the family. Where this was not stated directly, it was undoubtedly implied by the enthusiasm with which the groups discussed the desirability of specific behavioural patterns in the parent-child relationship and the actual behaviour of parents and children towards one another.

For example, some of the young people indicated that they did want children, but not too many — perhaps two or three. The reasons they gave for this were related: that the cost of living made it impossible to have more children, and that one wished to provide one's children with the best possible opportunities and more of them, which was impossible if one had several children. An aged coloured man remarked that "Ons bruin mense boer met kinders" in referring to past practices, indicating a change in the community since the time he was speaking about. In some groups, participants also suggested that they did not want to have children too soon after marriage, preferring first to establish their careers, and have adequate finances available and stable households. In their opinion, it is better to have a child when one is older, because the parents are more mature and better able to care for the child.

Some participants in the parents' groups also indicated that children were important for the following reasons:

- It is important to establish a line of descent.
- Something is missing if there are no children.
- It's nice to have children.
- Children strengthen the tie between husband and wife.

However, in this regard, warnings were uttered in some of the groups to the effect that one ought not to have a child to save a marriage. This can be summed up by a remark made in one of the groups to the effect that children makes a good marriage better, but can destroy a bad one.

It was also pointed out that children can place a burden on a marriage when:

- The mother pays too much attention to the children and neglects the father.
- Parents disagree about disciplining the children.
- Parents disagree about whether they should have children.

Apart from the desirability or undesirability of having children, the group discussions also covered a wide range of facets of desirable and actual behaviour in the parent-child relationship. Some points that refer specifically to the husband-wife relationship were also raised while discussing the parent-child relationship. These included love, respect, communication and the issue of the working mother. These more general factors will now be considered.

4.2 LOVE AND RESPECT

The aspect of love is strongly emphasized in the parent-child relationship. It was, for instance, said that children needed to grow up in a house where there was love and that they needed to be able to see this love in the way the parents act. Equally, both parents — father and mother — must show the children love, both verbally and physically, through body language and cuddling. In this connection, one person asserted that; when it came to love, actions spoke louder than words. Another interesting remark made by a young person was that, if children felt excluded, they knew their parents did not love them. A final illustration of this point is that children who know that their parents love each other are at peace, and that love protects them from "life's storms".

Groups in all the different contexts raised the matter of love, often from strong religious conviction. Although it was said that respect should be learned from infancy, the general opinion was that respect could not be enforced but had to be earned. In this regard, the following points were made:

- Respect is mutual and, if parents expect their children to respect them, they should respect their children.
- If as a parent one does not respect one's own child, one cannot expect respect from the child.
- Respect should not exclude love.

Furthermore, the example set by the parents plays an important role in the development of respect (or the lack thereof). If parents do "wrong" things, such as drinking too much or

shouting and screaming, their children may lose respect for them. However, if in their own behaviour parents follow the norms they lay down, this will develop respect on the child's part — as one participant said (in Afrikaans), "Respect can be learned and earned only by a good example." A question brought up in connection with the issue of respect between parents and children was the influence of the more informal forms of address that are used today. Although it was suggested that this was a sign of disrespect, the general opinion was that disrespect was not embodied in the form of address itself, but rather in the tone used. Equally, one does not lose respect if one is friends with one's children. However, it was pointed out that the line had to be drawn somewhere.

Although mutual respect in the parent-child relationship was emphasized strongly, a number of participants, especially in the grandparents' groups, indicated that today's children often lacked respect for their parents and that this impoverished family life.

4.3 CHILD'S RELATIONSHIPS WITH FATHER AND MOTHER

Whenever the parent-child relationship was raised in groups in all the different contexts, the parents were generally referred to as a unit in the sense that "their" relationship with and treatment of the child were discussed. However, in many of the groups separate reference was made to the roles of the husband and wife in their relationships with their children and these relationships were discussed independently. The relationship between the working mother and her children especially was frequently raised. It emerged clearly from these discussions that this was also an area in which considerable change was taking place.

4.3.1 Father-child relationship

The group discussions made it clear that in the more traditional family the father-child(ren) relationship was clearly differentiated from the mother-child(ren) relationship. In his capacity as breadwinner, the husband was so involved in his career that he had little time for the children. As a result, a wide gap developed between him and his children and they were thus often frightened of him. When the father wanted to know what his children were doing, he was enlightened by his wife, and he was often the final person to be called in to impose discipline. These "absent" fathers, therefore, did not really know their children and it was more difficult for the children to talk to their fathers than to their mothers. The mother was really the linchpin around which the home revolved. She was the one who shouldered the responsibility for the physical care and upbringing of the children. As a result, they were much closer to their mother than to their father. The children saw their mother as somebody special and both boys and girls would take their problems to her first. This meant that she often acted as a buffer and mediator between her husband and the children.

However, changes in this pattern have started to become evident, probably partly owing to married women's entry into the labour market. Today it is demanded more and more of the father that he become involved in caring for his children, both physically and intellectually. There has also been a realization of the important part the father plays as a role model in the

lives of both his sons and his daughters. This means that fathers should be involved in their children's upbringing, behave lovingly towards them and make an effort to find time for them.

On this issue, some fathers indicated that they did make an effort to talk to their children right from infancy, and chat to them so as to keep in contact with them. Examples were given of weekend family excursions, fathers attending sporting events with their children, families taking holidays together and fathers making an effort to be with the children when on holiday. A professional father told of how he kept one evening a week open in his diary for his family, and refused to permit any other appointment or meeting to clash with it. A coloured teacher mentioned that he and his children washed the dishes together in the evenings and also made opportunities to chat while watching selected television programmes together.

In spite of this closer relationship between men and their children, the impression was gained from the conversation in some of the groups that women still had a closer relationship with their children than men did.

4.3.2 Mother-child relationship

In the mother's case, her entry into the labour market has had a direct impact on her relationship with her children. It is significant that the issue of married women working outside the home evoked less opposition and unfavourable comment when it was considered exclusively in the context of the husband-wife relationship than when the mother-child relationship was taken into account. After the group discussions it was possible to identify three chief attitudinal patterns towards the desirability of mothers working outside the home:

- The first of these patterns constituted a **total rejection** of work outside the home for married women with children. This point of view featured strongly in the grandparents' groups. It was stated that a mother's place was in the home and the question arose whether it was really necessary for a mother to go out to work. The following arguments were put forward:
  - When children come home in the afternoons, someone ought to be there to supervise them.
  - If there is nobody at home, the children have to look after themselves and in the end they run wild on the streets.
  - When children are left unsupervised, they may fall back on peer groups where they may be exposed to drugs and other types of deviant behaviour.
  - The mother's absence may mean that there is no control over the children.
- The second pattern identified can be referred to as **unwilling or hesitant acceptance**. In this case, the basic view was that the woman ought to stay at home from the birth of her baby until it reached the age of approximately seven, as this was a critical period in the life of a child and formative for the personality. Various nostalgic remarks were made, including the following:

- These are a child's formative years and it is sad to miss so much of the child's development.
- It is a process of development, and one only realizes how much one has missed when the children are grown up.
- The care of a child in a facility is not the same as the care its own mother gives it.
- The mother's absence makes meaningful parenting difficult. By the time she gets home, she is too tired to make time for the children and to give them real quality time.

- The last pattern to emerge from the group discussions was one of **complete acceptance**. In this case, the basic view was that working women can still be good mothers, depending on their personalities and the way they deal with children.

  Although there is a great deal of pressure on working mothers, if they take their children seriously, they can make time to show an interest in them and in this way be better mothers. Furthermore, the children of working mothers become independent more quickly than those whose mothers do not work and also show more responsibility. It is also important that children should be well cared for, whether in a crèche, a nursery school or an after-care centre or by a day mother.

Taken as a whole, it appears that there is still a strong desire for mothers to stay at home, at least during the child's preschool years. If they do work, some of these women exhibit a great deal of ambivalence about working, while others accept that they will succeed in being good mothers.

4.4 PARENT-CHILD COMMUNICATION

What was stated in the previous chapter regarding the opinions and insights of spouses about marital communication is also valid in the case of parent-child communication. It was clear from the group discussions that communication between parents and children is also seen today as being of the greatest importance. In this respect, too, major changes have occurred over the past few decades.

Respondents in practically all the grandparents' groups indicated that they had grown up in homes where the rule was observed that children should be seen and not heard. A qualification made to this was that this was particularly true when adult company was present: when the family was alone, they could talk freely. However, answering back was not tolerated, and the accepted pattern was that the father's word was law.

This conception of children's role in communication within the family has changed dramatically. The change could be noted without exception in all the groups in all the different contexts. On this issue, the basic view encountered in all the groups was that communication with children was particularly important, and that they should be given full opportunity and encouraged to talk and to express their feelings. Children should also be taught to communicate from an early age, *inter alia* by following the example of how their parents communicate with each other. If this receives attention only at a later stage, it is

possible that children will fail to develop the openness to communicate freely with their parents.

An interesting remark made by a young coloured man was that parents paid a great deal of attention to their children and talked to them and played with them while they were still small (0-6 years). After that, there is a tendency for communication and cuddling to decrease. However, older children also feel the need for a relationship of spontaneous trust in which free communication can take place, especially during puberty and early adolescence.

One extremely important aspect of communication which, as in the case of husband-wife communication, was repeatedly emphasized, was the fact that parents should **listen** to their children. They must make a real attempt to develop an understanding of their children's emotional and experiential worlds and their points of view. Participants in some of the groups of young people also made the accusation that sometimes one did talk to one's parents, but they did not really listen to what one had to say. Parents ought also to admit their mistakes and, if necessary, ask the child's forgiveness. This process is naturally a reciprocal one and the same requirements of listening and apologizing also apply to children.

The notion that children ought to be included in the family communication process was emphasized to the extent that it was suggested that children had the right to make an input, and that family conferences or round-table discussions ought to be held as part of the decision-making process, during which children should be consulted. This view was expressed in quite a number of groups in the different contexts, with the exception of the lower-class coloured group. The young people also felt very strongly that they wished to be included in the decision-making process, especially when decisions were taken which affected them directly.

The requirement that there should be open communication makes heavy demands on parents. It implies that parents should have a high level of involvement with their children, should be interested in what they do and be there for their children, and this means that, in spite of their busy programmes, they must make time for their children. On this last issue, it was pointed out that communication could be affected if time could not be set aside specifically for it, and that this was a particular problem in respect of fathers. There were also a few participants who indicated that fathers tended to be more distant, that it was easier to approach a mother and that one felt more freedom to communicate with her than with a father.

It was indicated that communication could take place on a wide variety of subjects and should occur in a comfortable, conversational relationship. One person in a group of young people remarked in this connection that they did not "always want to be lectured". An area of communication that received particular mention was that of the problems that children experienced. In this case, it was indicated that children ought to feel free to discuss their problems with their parents and look for answers to them together with their parents.

Television was an issue mentioned regularly in the context of communication. In many group discussions, television was singled out as a hindrance to family communication,

although a few individuals did suggest that television could be utilized to communicate with children about the programmes, indicating where versions of reality differed and what aspects of that which was shown on television were right and what wrong.

In summary, therefore, it can be stated that a new value has developed with regard to communication between parent and child. Replacing the old value of downward communication from parent to child, the new value emphasizes the desirability of two-way communication — open communication, which consists essentially in creating the opportunity to state wants and feelings, together with the requirement that the other party should listen and develop insight into what is discussed.

4.5 AUTHORITY

Generally speaking, very little was said during the group discussions about the authority relationship between parents and children. Where it was raised, it appeared that, as in the case of the husband-wife authority pattern, this authority pattern had undergone change. A few participants indicated that the man was the head of the household, that children were aware of this, and that they needed to learn to handle authority.

In a few of the group discussions — especially in groups of young people — some degree of resistance to the man's (father's) position of authority was discernible. For example, one young girl in an Afrikaans-speaking white group stated that parents could abuse authority and that they ought not to force children to do things with them. A young boy, in turn, said that a father was the boss, and that this made him angry because he wanted to do things together with his father instead of being ordered about. One parent in a middle-class coloured group also pointed out that it was wrong for a man to declare his own word law and that he ought rather to listen while the child's side of a case was put.

Frequently occurring beliefs included these:

- Young people do not want to see their fathers just as figures of authority.
- The children of today do not want to be dictated to any more.
- Fathers ought to give guidance, rather than make decisions for their children.
- Fathers ought to be their children's mentors.
- Children want the freedom to make their own decisions under their parents' guidance.
- Children must be allowed to make their own mistakes and learn from them.
- If parents always make decisions on their children's behalf, the children do not develop self-confidence, which hinders their development to a state of independence.
- Children are no longer willing to accept instructions blindly. Instead, they expect their parents to explain why certain behaviour is expected of them.
- Fathers ought to exert authority only in a very subtle way.

Although a few people did still favour a father-dominant authority pattern, it did seem that there was a trend for the parent-child relationship to move towards a more democratic pattern in which children received guidance only, ultimately making their own decisions. This pattern emerges even more prominently if it is considered in conjunction with the trends in the patterns of parent-child communication which were discussed in the previous section.

4.6 THE PROCESS OF BRINGING UP CHILDREN

In contrast to the question of the parent-child relationship, there was considerable reaction to the issue of upbringing and discipline in all the groups in all the different contexts. There was also unanimity as to the importance of proper upbringing and the role discipline plays in this process, although there were sometimes differences of opinion regarding methods of disciplining. During the group discussions on upbringing, it emerged clearly that the mother was seen as the key figure in the process. At the same time, the point was made in groups across the spectrum that mothers could not do everything alone. Their husbands also have a role to play in bringing up the children — and do, in fact, play it. It is believed that grandparents ought not to be permitted to interfere in children's upbringing, although there were parents in the coloured groups whose opinion was that grandparents have an important part in the process because it is they who supervise the children in the afternoons after school. This means that children are not left to their own devices.

Although the school is recognized as an important agent in the education of children, the primary view is that it is the parents' task to impart to their children important values and principles that are not always negotiable. These include love, honesty, responsibility and religious values. Parents ought also to teach children to differentiate between right and wrong and to recognize that which is wrong. On this issue, a young woman in an Afrikaans-speaking white group suggested that parents ought to guide their children in such a way that they discover their values for themselves. In general, it is also the parents' task to teach children good manners and consideration for others, so as to inculcate socially acceptable behaviour.

4.6.1 Setting positive examples

The example which parents set for their children to follow is one of the ways of inculcating acceptable and correct behaviour. The importance and power of an example was stressed in groups in all the different contexts. In this connection, special emphasis was laid on the strength of the impact made when parents followed the norms they articulated. If parents do "wrong things", their children will imitate them, which may have negative consequences for the children's upbringing.

A problem highlighted during group discussions which faces parents in bringing up their children is that, because they want the very best for their children, they are sometimes inclined to do too much for them, which has a negative impact on their development. A great many comments were passed in the grandparents' groups to the effect that today's parents are no longer as strict as in "the old days" and that children are spoiled by being given everything

they ask for and being permitted to do whatever they want.

In the process of upbringing, children need to be guided in such a way that they mature into independent individuals who take responsibility for their own lives and can think for themselves. A phenomenon that sometimes retards this maturing process is that parents are overprotective, for children only learn when they can make their own decisions, and sometimes their own mistakes. When children come home later than agreed, parents ought to take the circumstances — which may be entirely relevant — into consideration. Children want their parents to trust them and not always to expect the worst of them. If they have confidence in the upbringing they have given their children, parents ought to trust them to act correctly. Some parents responded to this accusation by saying that present-day social circumstances mean that it is not always safe for children to be on the streets any more. This is why parents tend to be overprotective and are concerned when children are not home by the agreed time.

4.6.2 Disciplining

While there were a few participants who indicated that a pleasant atmosphere and good experiences in the home were important for the process of upbringing, there was general agreement in all the groups that discipline was an important aspect of the process. Discipline entails children not being permitted to do as they like. Instead there must be a normative framework that prescribes limits to children's activities. As children grow older, these limits can and may be extended.

An important facet of discipline which was brought up during the group discussions was routine. Bringing up a child in a particular routine is the starting point for a disciplined life and the development of self-discipline. One of the parents in an Afrikaans-speaking white group felt so strongly on this issue that she declared that routine, and especially bedtime, was non-negotiable. Another factor that develops self-discipline and responsibility is teaching the child from a young age to perform small tasks around the house.

A highly important aspect of discipline is that, where rules are broken, or in cases of undesirable behaviour, sanctions must be applied in the form of punishment. All the groups were unanimous that punishment was an essential part of discipline, but there was no consensus, and often debate, as to what the exact nature of the punishment ought to be.

There were individuals in a wide spectrum of groups who believed that corporal punishment is acceptable, provided it does not leave physical marks or lead to physical abuse. As one of the youths remarked (in Afrikaans), "A smack with a bare hand is fine, but not a sjambok." However, the same group included participants who were opposed to corporal punishment and felt that there were other forms of punishment which were just as effective, if not more so. Some of the other forms of punishment that were mentioned were scolding, talking to the child in such a way that she/he felt guilty, denial of privileges, shutting a child up in a room for a period of time and "grounding".

An important point made, especially by the young people, is that parents must explain to a child why he/she is being punished. If the reasons provided are valid, the child will sense the

justice of the action. For this reason, punishment must not be applied blindly, and under no circumstances should a child be punished out of frustration or irritation. Furthermore, punishment ought to take place in a loving environment. In fact, discipline and love go hand in hand. Love without discipline is ineffective, and the reverse is also true.

A particularly important aspect of disciplining children which was mentioned repeatedly was that parents should be consistent in their actions towards their children. Their "yea" must be "yea" and their "nay", "nay". If parents are inconsistent, this can lead to a high level of insecurity on the part of the child. It is also important that parents should share a similar approach to disciplining their children. Where there are serious differences over this matter between parents, conflict between them may escalate and/or the children may begin to play off the parents against each other. This can create problems in the children's development.

4.6.3 Rows in the children's presence

An issue that came up for discussion in a large number of groups across the spectrum was the question of whether, when conflict arose, the parents should have rows in front of the children or not. It was clear from the discussions that the groups were not united on this issue. On the one hand, in some groups the opinion was stated that parents ought not to have arguments in front of the children. The following reasons were put forward in support of this view:

- It upsets the children.
- Arguments between parents contribute to a high level of insecurity on the part of the children.
- Continuous arguments between parents arouse fears among children that their parents are going to get divorced.

Some of the young people also said that they preferred their parents to settle their differences in private and not involve them: otherwise, they were made to feel guilty — as if they were expected to take sides. Children experience it as a major embarrassment if parents have rows in front of their friends.

Parents' groups often exhibited uncertainty on this issue. Many of them agreed with the ideas of the young people, and stated it as a matter of principle that one should not become involved in arguments in front of the children.

In contrast to the above view, there were individuals in groups in all the contexts who held the opposite opinion. Their argument was that if parents handled conflicts correctly, refrained from belittling each other, did not scream at each other, achieved agreement and resolved the problem, this could teach children how to handle conflict and show them that conflict did not mean the end of a relationship.

Children ought also to be specifically informed when the conflict has been resolved and a solution to the problem found. According to its exponents, this approach makes the child aware that marriage and family life involve conflict and the resolution of problems. This is a

more accurate reflection of reality than the view that there should be no rows in front of the children, which can create the illusion that life is free from problems. This is fundamentally dishonest and, in the long term, can only result in the children becoming disillusioned.

4.6.4 Peer group pressure

A serious problem which is encountered in bringing up children, especially as viewed by the lower-class coloured groups, is the influence of peer groups on children. It emerged from the discussions in these groups that a major problem was that parents completely lost control over their teenage children and that drugs, especially dagga (marijuana) and alcohol, caused serious problems. This gives rise to a great deal of concern among parents. This concern emerged so strongly in one lower-class coloured parents' group that parents spoke of their fear that they would be harmed by the peer group if they disciplined their own children.

In general, parents' and grandparents' groups expressed the feeling that peer group pressure was a force to be reckoned with.

Practical suggestions were made to deal with peer group pressure. These were:

- Parents should be in constant communication with their children about their friends and the groups they associate with.
- It is the parents' responsibility to "be there" for their children, because "Our children look to peer groups for a shoulder to lean on because they do not find it at home from us" (opinion expressed in Afrikaans in a coloured parents' group).
- Sport and recreation can provide a counter to the negative influence of street groups.
- Children need to be made aware of the ways in which they can unknowingly be introduced to drugs.

Group discussions in the different contexts did produce admissions by young people of the negative influence of peer groups, but they argued that:

- If you have developed a healthy self-image and self-confidence in your home and if you have been taught to make your own choices, you can withstand group pressure.

As has been shown, drugs and drug smuggling are problems that are strongly influenced by peer groups. Apart from these problems, reference was also made to the agenda set for young girls in such peer groups: "If you are not sexually active and have not had a baby yet, you are not grown up" (coloured parents' and grandparents' groups).

Reference was also made to peer groups in the white groups, but serious problems such as these were not mentioned. One problem that was widely referred to was the fact that these groups often exerted pressure on teenagers to become sexually active. This points to the importance of sex education as an aspect of bringing up and educating children.

4.7 SEX EDUCATION AND CHANGING VALUES UNDERLYING SEXUALITY

One or other factor relating to values underpinning sexuality was raised in the group discussions of all three generations and in all the different contexts.

The group discussions dealing with values that underlie sexuality can be considered broadly in three categories:

- Concern about loose morals, as reflected by illegitimacy and the birth of "*voorkinders*"[1] as opposed to the desirability of virginity.
- The desirability of sex education.
- The use of contraceptives and the increase in teenage pregnancies.

4.7.1 The desirability of premarital chastity

Concern was voiced in various groups about the loose morals of the present generation of young people. This was especially noticeable in the discussions with grandparents and groups in which a strong religious sense could be detected. It is in this area that the greatest number of differences in the views and convictions of respondents from different contexts were noted. Differences in outlook were evident between English- and Afrikaans-speaking white groups as well as between white and coloured groups. An instance that emphasizes the differences between English- and Afrikaans-speaking white groups can be seen in a remark made (in Afrikaans) in a group of Afrikaans-speaking young people: "Afrikaans children have a strict moral upbringing." Special mention was then made of the desirability of premarital chastity or the norm of virginity — in other words, the prohibition on sexual intercourse before or outside of formal marriage. In its discussion, this particular group referred to the solution they often adopted to deal with the problem of their sexual needs — marrying early — which could lead to problems at a later stage.

In contrast, this particular issue was practically never brought up in this form in the English-speaking white groups. Support for the norm of virginity was found only in a few English-speaking white groups, where it was based on a strong religious conviction. This religiously based support for the norm of virginity was also found in Afrikaans-speaking white and coloured groups. An example of this comes from a group of Afrikaans-speaking young white people, where the claim was advanced on Biblical grounds that "The Creator did not make us to practise extramarital sex". If young people from this milieu do practice premarital sex, they feel guilty about doing so and experience it as a transgression of a moral law.

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[1] This term is a colloquialism for children born before a mother's marriage. It does not carry the stigma often attached to illegitimacy. There is no exact English equivalent and the original Afrikaans term will therefore be retained.

Similarly, in a coloured parents' group, a father said (in Afrikaans), "My daughter must be 'pure' when she leaves my house." A young coloured woman in a parents' group expressed her attitude (in Afrikaans) as: "Marriage is holy and was instituted by God. God will be proud if there is no sex before marriage."

It thus seems that a strong religious orientation plays an important role in preserving premarital chastity.

It was recognised in all the groups across the spectrum that the desirability of premarital sexual abstention was more strongly emphasized in previous generations. This value is still recognized today, but the recognition accorded it sometimes amounts to mere lip service. It is also the case that public opinion is now less strongly opposed to contraventions of this value. In practice, this means that the desirability of premarital abstention can be represented by a continuum with uncompromising observance of the norm of virginity at one pole and complete rejection of it at the other. The position in between constitutes paying lip service to the norm and striving to observe it, but accepting the possibility of a lapse.

On occasion, participants in the various groups speculated among themselves as to how general premarital sex actually is. The overall trend of one such discussion among English-speaking white girls was, "Yes to abstention, because premarital sex damages trust — if you have had sexual intercourse with me, how do I know you have not had it with others too?" Basically, then, the issue is one of exclusivity. This issue was followed by a further question: "What about the developing norm that sex is fun?" The answer was, "No sex without love!" This could be interpreted as recognition of change concerning the desirability of premarital sexual abstention as opposed to the recognition of premarital sexual activity, provided it falls within the norm of love.

None of the groups could reach a decision as to whether the value of sexual abstention before marriage is still maintained, because until the free availability of contraceptives this was measured in terms of illegitimate birthrates. On this issue, there are very clear differences between white and coloured groups. In white group discussions, the term "illegitimate births" was used, while coloured groups referred to "*voorkinders*".

In the discussions in the various contexts, different nuances were again observable in respect of the issue of illegitimacy. In an Afrikaans-speaking white group consisting of parents and young people, this shift was indicated as awareness of change in attitudes in the following respects:

- The issue no longer evokes the total shock that it did in previous generations.
- There is no longer a stigma attached to "illegitimate" babies.
- A young unmarried girl who falls pregnant no longer encounters the same level of pressure from her parents to marry the biological father of the baby — what were known as "shotgun weddings".
- Babies born before marriage are not as frequently put up for adoption as used to be the case — young women frequently prefer to bring up their babies themselves.

Likewise, the phenomenon of *voorkinders* was discussed and debated in groups by three generations of coloured people. Illustrations of their remarks follow:

- A grandmother remarked that "*voorkinders* or 'readymade' children were not regarded as so wrong in previous generations."
- In another grandparents' group, the view was expressed that *voorkinders* were proof of fertility.
- In an English-speaking coloured group, it was felt that — on moral grounds — the stigma attached to *voorkinders* was not great. However, there are practical considerations (e.g. financial) that do make this a problem.
- During a debate about "illegitimate babies" and "*voorkinders*" that took place between coloured and white women in a parents' group, a coloured mother summed up the situation (in Afrikaans) in this way: "Transgressing the norm of virginity is not such a crisis. *Voorkinders* are usually cared for by the grandmother and not too much pressure is exerted on the biological parents to get them to marry."

Young coloured women described their parents' reactions to their pregnancies with *voorkinders* as of considerable dissatisfaction to start with but said that later they became very proud of such a *voorkind* who was accepted as their own. Other group discussions also indicated that *voorkinders* were generally looked after by their grandparents.

The following problems regarding the care of *voorkinders* called forth a fair amount of discussion:

- Grandparents are sometimes too old to look after *voorkinders* until it is no longer necessary.
- Where the mothers of *voorkinders* do marry, the child often remains in the grandparents' care because step-relationships can cause problems. In one discussion in a parents' group, reference was made to the abuse or molestation of *voorkinders* by their stepfathers and the remark was made that, in such cases, a *voorkind* became an abandoned child.
- Sometimes mention was made that grandparents spoiled *voorkinders* and did not discipline them sufficiently.

In all the contexts, discussions dealing with sexuality referred to the inadequacy or non-existence of the sex education provided to children.

4.7.2 The desirability of sex education

There was general consensus in all the groups across the spectrum that previous generations had provided little appropriate sex education. "Monkey tales" about where babies came from

were widespread. There were taboos concerning references to pregnancy and pregnant women and there was no communication between parents and children on the subject. The various statements made included the following:

- When she begins menstruating, parents tell a girl that "Now you will have to beware of men" — without telling her what she will have to beware of.
- Parents say nothing about the subject, and leave it to the school, friends or other members of the family to teach children "the facts of life".
- Parents feel uncomfortable and believe that children are "trying to act grown up" when conversation moves in the direction of sex education (young coloured people's group). There was speculation in the same group about whether a mother's embarrassment and discomfort about talking about sex with her children could have stemmed from her having had a *voorkind* or having been one herself.
- In one coloured parents' group, a nurse related that she only really discovered "where babies come from" during her training in midwifery.

In various cultural groups, as well as acknowledging that previous generations had neglected sex education, young people expressed the intention of providing their own children with sex education. It was suggested that this should emphasize the positive component of love in sex, in contrast to the almost clinical treatment of sexuality at school.

In this context, it was stated in a group of young Afrikaans-speaking people that children should not be threatened with "hellfire and damnation" but rather taught to accept responsibility for their sexuality. And as a coloured mother said (in Afrikaans) in a parents' group, "If you have climbed into bed with a man, you have to bear the consequences."

Especially in coloured groups, discussions about sex education were connected with the use of contraceptives and visits to the clinic.

4.7.3 Contraceptives and teenage pregnancies

The degree of ambivalence exhibited in parents' and grandparents' groups about the use of contraceptives by young people was noteworthy. On the one hand, parents displayed resistance to the use of the contraceptives that were freely available from clinics. Parents claim that this can easily be interpreted by teenagers as a green light for promiscuity.

On the other hand, there were parents who were fearful that teenagers who were sexually active in any case might fall pregnant while they were still at school, in which case they looked the other way and allowed their children to go to the clinics. The suggestion was also made that parents ought to discuss contraceptives and their use with their children and then leave it up to the children whether they used them or not. A belief encountered in coloured groups was that women who used contraceptives might become sterile. For this reason, mothers fear that, if they take their daughters to the clinic, their daughters may one day blame them if they are childless.

An opposing position was also expressed, with persons stating that they would not refer children to a clinic, but would bring them up to abstain from premarital sexual intercourse instead.

On the whole, it seems that the desirability of premarital chastity is still maintained among the different cultural groups, but that change has taken place in this regard. More particularly, there has been movement towards condoning premarital sexual intercourse, provided there is an emotional tie between the couple. The desirability of sex education is also increasingly evident in all groups.

4.8 SUMMARY

As emerged during the group discussions, some of the most important values in respect of the parent-child relationship that were seen as important building blocks for quality family life, were:

- Children are regarded as being extremely important. People prefer not to be childless.
- Smaller families are seen as desirable and, in the light of economic realities, are preferred.
- Mutual love and respect are regarded as essential.
- It is highly desirable that fathers should accept a greater share in bringing up children and that the concept of the absent father should be abandoned.
- On the one hand, it is highly desirable that mothers should stay at home while their children are small; on the other hand, when mothers do go out to work, some of them are ambivalent towards their work while others believe that they will succeed in being good mothers. A few women held the view that it was desirable for them to work, as they would be better mothers if they had a career.
- A new value has developed to replace the desirability of downward communication from parent to child. This is the emphatic belief in the desirability of two-way and open communication, incorporating the opportunity for needs and feelings to be stated, combined with the requirement that each party should listen and develop insight into the other's point of view.
- There has been movement away from the father-dominant pattern of authority towards a more democratic pattern. In this pattern, the desirability of guiding children to a position where they can eventually make their own decisions is emphasized.
- An upbringing in which children are taught basic values in the home as well as social skills is seen as desirable.
- Discipline which provides children with limits and a normative framework within which they can act is seen as desirable. Transgressions ought to be punished in a consistent way, with the parents acting in agreement.

- An emphasis on a strong parent-child relationship of trust is seen as a counter to the negative pressure of peer groups.
- Premarital chastity is still supported by persons with a strong religious orientation.
- Premarital sex but only within the context of love is developing as a new norm.
- Sex education is regarded as essential in the development of children's sexuality.
- The availability of information about contraceptives and the services that clinics provide is seen as desirable in order to prevent unwanted births and especially teenage pregnancies.
- The stigma attached to illegitimate children is decreasing among whites.
- Although coloured parents express dissatisfaction at the birth of *voorkinders*, there is no stigma attached to these children and the norm has developed that they are looked after by their grandparents.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

In view of the rising divorce rate, the high incidence of child abuse and family violence in certain sectors of the population, the increasing trend towards cohabitation and the high level of stress that the family is exposed to in modern urban-industrial society, the government has become gravely concerned about the state of family life in South African society. Such concern about family life is by no means unique to this country. Escalating family disorganization, which is reflected in various types of family statistics, has aroused anxiety in various Western societies, both in government and among researchers in family studies.

Increasing family problems and family disorganization in Western countries have over time given rise to questions about the desirability of the family *per se* as well as about the survival of the family as an institution. The debate on these questions has produced diverse views. The most negative of these is that the family is a hotbed of suppression and pathology and that it is an extremely good thing that the family and family values are in decline. Some of those who adopt this view have even proclaimed, with great satisfaction, the "death" of the family.

A slightly less negative view, but still one to be noted with concern, is that the family does exhibit a high level of decline, which is injurious to both the individual and society. Less than five years ago, Popenoe (1993b) expressed concern about this. In his opinion, there are two faces to the decline: first, that the traditional form of the family is disintegrating and, second, that the family as an institution and family values are in decline.

The most positive view, which is still a disturbing one, is that the family is a resilient and adaptable institution, with family values in a relatively sound state, but that, owing to the impact of far-reaching social change, it is faced with serious problems which will become increasingly more severe unless steps are taken to deal with them.

Certain statistical trends indicating a disturbing increase in family disorganization are discernible in South African society. This gives rise to the question as to which of these three assumptions is most closely applicable to family life in this country. In attempting to answer this question, it is necessary to take note of a major criticism which has been levelled against interpretations by various researchers in the debate on the state of family life in Western society. This is that the researchers base their views largely on statistical trends in family life, and their ideological partiality often influences their interpretation of the trends. Consequently, the extent of decline (or otherwise) read into the statistical trends is determined more by the particular researcher's own value system than by the values concerning the family held by the society.

Instead of simply making analyses of statistical trends and interpreting them, it is thus necessary to take careful account of the views and values that the society itself holds on these matters. Only when this is done is it possible to determine whether the family is still considered to be of value and, if so, precisely what the values underlying quality family life are. With this in mind, it was decided, when choosing the respondents from the coloured and white groups, to conduct unstructured, in-depth interviews in group context. It was assumed that persons conducting a free discussion about family values in a group context would raise the issues that were truly important to them and that they would spontaneously air their views about those matters, about which they truly felt deeply. Apart from the group discussions, most participants also completed a short questionnaire to assist in the contextualization of the groups.

When the data were analysed, the group discussions showed that the respondents had a very clear conception of the values underpinning quality marriages and family life which they themselves strove to observe. What follows is of a summary of the most important values in respect of marriage and family life that emerged from the analysis of the group interviews.

5.2 POSITIVE VALUES UNDERPINNING QUALITY MARRIAGE AND FAMILY LIFE

Analysis of the group interviews showed clearly that the respondents had a strong belief in values that underpin quality family life in general and quality husband-wife relationships and parent-child relationships in particular.

5.2.1 Values underpinning quality family life

The following values regarding the family in general are still believed in:

- From the social point of view, marriage and family life is still regarded as the desirable pattern, both on religious grounds and because of the individual's needs for which it caters. There is a strong belief in the survival of marriage and family life, despite uncertainties and ambivalences. Such uncertainties relate particularly to the environmental conditions and social pressures marriage has to withstand. These cause people to doubt whether they will be capable of making a marriage succeed.
- Particularly on religious grounds, the desirability of marriage being a permanent relationship is emphasized, although increasing pragmatism on this issue is evident — that is, the view that under intolerable circumstances, it is preferable for a marriage to be terminated.
- The desirability of exclusivity in the marital relationship is strongly emphasized and marital infidelity is viewed in a serious light and as one of the reasons for the termination of a marital relationship.

- The desirability of a strong family unit in which people find security and permanence is strongly emphasized.
- The nuclear family is still considered the desirable family structure, although allowance is made for other family structures (such as the single-parent family).
- The privacy of the nuclear family is strongly emphasized. It is seen as undesirable for grandparents to make their home with the nuclear family, although a difference can be observed between coloureds and whites in this regard. Coloureds see it as more desirable to take grandparents into the household than do whites.
- Maintaining a strong kinship network and taking responsibility for grandparents is seen as very desirable in all the groups.
- Although uncertainties and ambivalences about the ability to maintain a specific marital relationship did come to light, it seems clear that belief in the desirability of the nuclear family, the exclusivity and permanence of marriage, the desirability of a strong family unit and the maintenance of strong kinship networks still survives.

5.2.2 Values underpinning quality marital relationships

The most important values identified with regard to the husband-wife relationship were:

- Mutual love and respect.
- Open and honest two-way communication in which the lines of communication are kept open, listening constitutes an important facet of communication and communication takes place over a wide front — from simple laughing and chatting to problem-solving communication.
- A shift away from the husband-dominant authority pattern to a situation in which the husband is still considered the head of the household, but with his wife as junior or equal partner in the decision-making process, which indicates movement towards a more egalitarian pattern.
- The desirability of a good relationship between spouses, characterized by knowing and understanding each other, allowing each other room for personal growth, mutual help, support and assistance, and generally maintaining a pattern of unity and reciprocity.
- Maturity, morality and altruism as desirable character traits in spouses.
- A shift away from the view that women ought not to work outside the home to an acceptance of their entry into the labour market, partly on pragmatic grounds (for example, that women make an important contribution to the family income in times of economic difficulty) and partly on ideological grounds (for example, that women have the right to choose, that they have a right to career fulfilment, and that, because of their training, they cannot be denied the right to follow a career).

- A shift from the traditional view of differentiated family roles to the view that men should help around the house if their wives work, and even towards a more egalitarian view in which the desirability of equality, interchangeability and negotiability within the family sphere is emphasized.

The fact that positive values were identified as supporting quality marriages does not imply that problems do not occur in marriages. This is a fact of which the respondents were thoroughly conscious. In fact, they exhibited a strong awareness of the realities, and could clearly indicate where problems arose in marriage and family life. The respondents also raised problems of marriage and family life in the group discussions and indicated them in the questionnaire. However, there was a differential indication of these problems among the various classes. Among lower- and middle-class coloureds, the problems of alcohol and violence in the family were indicated more frequently than was the case among Afrikaans- and English-speaking whites. The middle-class coloureds and the whites — both Afrikaans- and English-speaking — referred more frequently than did lower-class coloureds to problems in relationships and communication.

There is undoubtedly a clearly observable shift in the values underpinning a quality husband-wife relationship. Old values are gradually being phased out and new ones are taking their place, although some of these new values are still highly fluid and not always manifested in a very clearly defined form. In view of this, it can reasonably be claimed that there is no question of a total disintegration of values in the husband-wife relationship.

5.2.3 Values underpinning quality parent-child relationships

The most important values identified with regard to the parent-child relationship were:

- Mutual love and respect.
- The desirability of fathers taking responsibility for a larger share in children's upbringing and of moving away from the concept of the absent father.
- The desirability, on the one hand, of mothers staying at home while their children are small; on the other hand, when mothers do go out to work, some of them are ambivalent towards their work, while others believe that they will succeed in being good mothers. A few women held the view that it was desirable for them to work, as they would be better mothers if they had a career.
- In the place of the desirability of downward communication from parent to child, a new value has developed which emphasizes the desirability of two-way and open communication, incorporating the opportunity for needs and feelings to be stated, combined with the requirement that each party should listen and develop insight into the other's point of view.

- There has been a movement away from the father-dominant authority pattern to a more democratic pattern emphasizing the desirability of guiding children to a position where they can eventually make their own decisions.
- An upbringing in which children are taught the basic values in the home as well as social skills is seen as desirable.
- Discipline which provides children with limits and a normative framework within which they can act is seen as desirable. Transgressions ought to be punished in a consistent way, with the parents acting in agreement.
- An emphasis on a strong parent-child relationship of trust is seen as a counter to the negative pressure of peer groups.
- Premarital chastity is still supported by persons with a strong religious orientation.
- Premarital sex but only within the context of love is developing as a new norm.
- Sex education is regarded as essential in the development of children's sexuality.
- The availability of information about contraceptives and the services that clinics provide is seen as desirable in order to prevent unwanted births and especially teenage pregnancies.
- The stigma attached to illegitimate children is decreasing among whites.
- Although coloured parents express dissatisfaction at the birth of *voorkinders*, there is no stigma attached to these children and the norm has developed that they are looked after by their grandparents.

When the results of this research are superficially reviewed, it is clear that, although some of the values that are advocated for the family have been subject to considerable change, firm values supporting quality marriage and family life are still strongly present in the coloured and white population. There is no question of the decline of the family as an institution or of family values, as Popenoe (1993a) claims is the case in American family life. We see, for example, that the values of the traditional family — male-dominance, with the husband as breadwinner and the wife the homemaker — are changing into a more egalitarian authority relationship and an acceptance of the wife as fellow-breadwinner. However, this does not mean that the nuclear family is disintegrating. In fact, this research has shown that a high premium is placed on the nuclear family (consisting of husband, wife and children) as the basic family unit, although allowance is made for other family types. There are also strong central values supporting quality family life in general and the marital and parent-child relationships in particular.

However, the fact that the values relating to marriage and family life are still adhered to does not mean that no problems are evident. Indeed, a strongly realistic awareness of problems that have to be faced in marriage and family life, and that result in values not always

being achieved in practice, was found in all the groups in the different contexts. An example of this is the finding that, in spite of the value of the permanence of marriage, the view is current that divorce is permissible if a situation becomes intolerable. This supports Joubert's (1995) view that, owing to practical circumstances, beliefs do not always find realization in practical actions.

The fact that, owing to practical circumstances, core values regarding marriage and family life are not always realized in actual behaviour, focuses renewed attention on the problems facing the family in South Africa. These problems were not only brought up repeatedly in most of the group discussions in all the contexts: they are also reflected in the high divorce rate as an indicator of family disorganization in this country.

If the question is posed as to which view on the state of marriage and family life, as highlighted by Berger and Berger (1983), may be applied to the South African situation, one could reasonably claim that it is the third — that the family is a vital and flexible institution, with family values in reasonably good condition, but that, as a result of the impact of far-reaching social change and environmental conditions, it faces serious problems which will worsen if nothing is done to combat them.

Both the values which were brought to light by the research and the problems that have been referred to lend weight to a suggestion made in the discussion of the aims of the research. This is that the data should be utilized for the development of support programmes.

5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF SUPPORT PROGRAMMES FOR QUALITY MARRIAGE AND FAMILY LIFE

There was consensus among the respondents in many of the group discussions across the spectrum that support programmes for strengthening marriage and family life were essential.

The need was expressed for programmes that will prepare young people for quality marriage and family life. Various suggestions that could be followed up were made:

- That parents are still the primary source of sex education and it is they who prepare children for quality marriage and family life; this should remain as it is.
- At an early stage schools ought to implement programmes that consist of more than just sex education. This should be done in close co-operation with parents and the ages of the children should be borne in mind.
- Programmes for secondary school students ought to make provision for the development of life skills that will facilitate the growth of relationships at all levels — what does it mean to be human, what does it mean to be a fellow-human, who am I and who are you.
- Programmes ought thus to commence at primary school level and ought to be broader than the kind of technical sex education that is currently presented.

- It is an open question whether these programmes should be presented by school staff or whether they should be presented by persons in ancillary professions who have the necessary training.
- Guidance and preparation for marriage ought preferably to be presented in the form of group discussions, rather than through lectures. All the groups involved in this research project expressed appreciation of the discussions in which they participated. The opinion was expressed that the same format should be used for the presentation of guidance programmes.
- This guidance ought to be presented to co-educational groups (boys and girls).
- Consideration ought to be given to the possibility of group discussions involving both parents and children as preparation for marriage.

5.3.1 Programmes for young people in the post-school context

In addition to the suggestions which have already been mentioned, programmes ought to be developed for young people in the post-school context — whether they are getting married or not. These programmes ought to address the development of skills which may be central in marital and family relationships but which are also more generally applicable in interpersonal interaction. The following are suggestions which could be followed up:

- Programmes should aim to develop the skills of giving and taking love (caring), building friendship and comradeship.
- Programmes should be presented on an ongoing basis. This would give young people the opportunity to provide feedback on the practical results of the contents presented — after all, life skills are things that have to be practised.
- Programme development ought to be the responsibility of churches and community groups.

5.3.2 Preparation for parenthood

Such programmes would provide information and would be applicable on a general level. However, there is also a need for more specific preparation for parenthood among couples who are engaged, have stable relationships or are newly wed. These possibilities are suggested:

- A discussion of the desirability of having children or not and of how long one should wait to have children after getting married.
- Programmes of preparation for practical parenthood.
- Programmes dealing with changing husband-wife relationships following the birth of a first child, or with modified family relationships when further children are born.

- Once again, the development of programmes should be the responsibility of churches and community groups.

5.3.3 Marriage enrichment programmes

Ongoing programmes for marriage enrichment and for furthering quality marriage and family relationships, instead of one-off or annual programmes, are essential.

In this connection, suggestions include:

- Programmes which, in addition to the above-mentioned aspects, cover:
  - Communication skills in husband-wife relationships and in parent-child relationships.
  - Dealing with relationships within broader kinship systems — parents, grandparents, parents-in-law and other kinship relationships.
  - A more clearly defined and acceptable role for grandparents in their grandchildren's upbringing.
  - Handling differences and conflict in the process of negotiation to resolve differences.
  - The upbringing and disciplining of younger children, and guidance towards independence and the acceptance of responsibility for older children.

The possibility of presenting programmes for men in the workplace was also mentioned in groups in different contexts. The reasoning behind this suggestion was that men are usually not motivated to join community programmes as such.

- Programmes that make provision for the establishment and running of support groups and parental guidance groups in communities, where the guidance would be provided by professional persons only.

Apart from the previously mentioned programmes, in view of the high divorce rate it seems necessary to pay attention to the implementation and expansion of community programmes to provide divorce counselling and guidance. These programmes should involve divorced couples, their children and also their parents.

The responsibility for planning and implementing programmes for quality marriage and family life at various levels can be laid at the door of churches and community groupings. However, it is the researchers' hope — and indeed this is their general recommendation — that this report should be considered by the Department of Welfare when formulating the National Plan for Family Life, as well as when future welfare and family policy is formulated.

5.4 FUTURE RESEARCH

In addition to these research findings being used in practical marital guidance and family enrichment programmes, it is also necessary for them to be extended and made more precise.

Some suggestions that can be made in this regard follow:

- A qualitative study of the values supporting quality marriage and family life in respect of Asian South Africans.
- A qualitative study of the values supporting the marriage and family life of lower-class white South Africans.
- A quantitative study of the values supporting quality marriage and family life among all South African cultural groups. The completed and proposed qualitative studies could be combined to serve as a basis for constructing the questionnaire for this research. Such a research project would make possible a more precise analysis of the occurrence and distribution of values among the various cultural groups as well as the different socio-economic classes.
- A comparative analysis of the research results concerning the values supporting quality marriage and family life.
- It is clear that state subsidies for homes for the aged will be cut back (and indeed already have been). This makes research into the family dynamics of re-incorporating the aged into families an urgent priority, so that the necessary guidance and services can be made available.

Extensive research of this nature should be of considerable assistance to the Department of Welfare in developing a family policy.

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